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VANITY FAIR

Volume 55 Number 5 May 1992



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Out on a Limbaugh, page 156.



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Editor's Letter

Hail to the Chiefs?



Which Clinton is running for the White House, Bill or Hillary? The answer is both. Though it has become a major controversy, Clinton himself has acknowledged his long-standing dependence on his wife. Her superior drive and judgment have been crucial to his five terms as governor of Arkansas and his current presidential campaign. "If I get elected," the candidate told Gail Sheehy, "it will be an unprecedented partnership, far more than Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor. They were two great people, but on different tracks. If I get elected, we'll do things together like we always have." Or, as he has put it at his fund-raisers, "Buy one, get one free."

Sheehy's portrait of Hillary and the shifting dynamics of the Clintons' high-octane marriage (page 140) makes it clear how different she is from other political wives. While they have influence, she wants power. While they remain safely tucked in their husbands' shadows, she has traded pillow talk for the public podium and the media glare. In fact, as Sheehy reveals, Hillary has already seriously considered running for governor of Arkansas on her own. And on Super Tuesday even the unflappable Tom Brokaw was startled when Hillary shot past Bill to man the mike, giving a triumphal speech that barely mentioned her husband's name.

So prominent and aggressive a role has she played that there has been a rash of columns about "the Hillary problem." Her Tammy Wynette and tea-and-cookies snafus have offended huge blocs of natural Clinton supporters and made many question her political viability.

Yet, clearly, Hillary Clinton is a formidable force. She is one of the point women of the empowered sixties generation, a nationally respected corporate litigator who has twice been voted one of the hundred most influential lawyers in America and reportedly earns four times what her husband makes. She is a member of five corporate boards and the past chair of Arkansas's Education Standards Committee, and her name has become synonymous with educational reform and legal rights for children. During her husband's current campaign, she has become the ultimate campaign architect, strategizing, fixing, orchestrating spin control. It was Hillary who brainstormed the counterattack on Gennifer Flowers, labeling the media scandal "the daughter of Willie Horton" and stage-managing the couple's extraordinary *60 Minutes* appearance, thereby resurrecting her husband's dying presidential bid.

In an article that traces the origin of his wife's role in Clinton's life, Gail Sheehy explores the conflicts and trade-offs Hillary has survived in trying to reconcile her life as a wife, a mother, and a political force whose private life is public spectacle. Unlike the luckless Lee Hart or the unhappy Kitty Dukakis, Sheehy finds, Hillary seems to have grown in this harsh limelight. If Clinton does not make it to the White House this November, the campaign may prove just a dress rehearsal for Hillary.

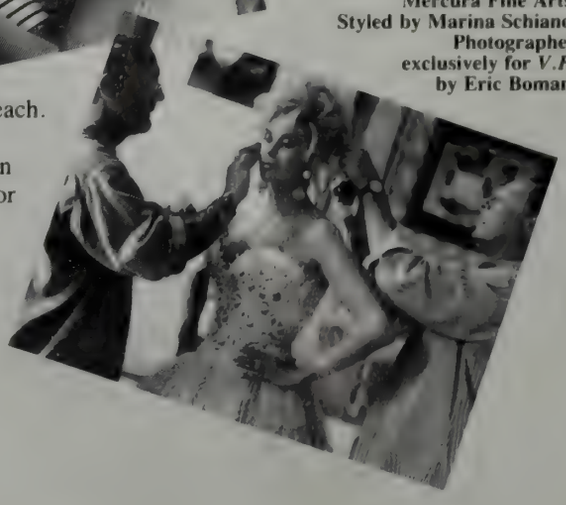
Tina Brown

Editor in chief

Cover

Say Sex





Ivana Trump with photographer Eric Boman, *top*, at Mar-a-Lago, the Trump estate in Palm Beach. *Bottom*, "La Trumpová" dolls up for the photo session with, left, Andrea Paoletti for Pierre Michel at the Plaza, who did makeup, and, right, Maury Hopson for Louis Licari, who styled her hair.

On the cover, Ivana Trump wears a dress by Bob Mackie, stockings by Fogal of Switzerland, shoes by Susan Bennis Warren Edwards, earrings by Eric Beamon at Showroom Seven, and sunglasses by Mercura Fine Arts. Styled by Marina Schiano. Photographed exclusively for *V.F.* by Eric Boman.



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Contributors

Eric Boman, the photographer, is working on a series of still lifes. His photographs have appeared in *Vogue*, British *Vogue*, and French *Vogue*.

Peter J. Boyer is writing a book for Random House.

Ben Brantley reports regularly from New York, Los Angeles, and Europe.

Richard M. Clurman spent more than twenty years at Time Inc. as a writer, reporter, chief of worldwide Time-Life correspondents, and senior editorial executive. He is the author of *To the End of Time: The Seduction and Conquest of a Media Empire*, just out from Simon & Schuster.

Bob Colacello is currently covering the European social and cultural scene for *V.F.* He is the author of *Holy Terror: Andy Warhol Close Up* (HarperPerennial).

Fred Goodman is writing a book about the history of the rock 'n' roll business for Times Books.

Luisita Lopez Torregrosa, formerly an editor at *The New York Times*, is writing a book on the Philippines for W. W. Norton. "After reporting on coups and massacres in the Philippines," she says of her piece this month, "I thought nothing in that country could surprise me, but the level of cynicism and dirt in their presidential campaign is startling. The presence of Imelda alone has heated up the passions. Imelda is much like her nation, often maddening and bizarre, yet sometimes touching."

Gail Sheehy's latest book, *The Silent Passage: Menopause*, originating with her October 1991 *V.F.* piece, is just out from Random House.

Michael Shnayerson is the author of *Irwin Shaw: A Biography* (Putnam). He is a consulting editor of *Condé Nast Traveler*.

Mark Stevens frequently covers art for *V.F.* He is at work on a biography of Willem de Kooning.

Auberon Waugh, editor of *The Literary Review* in London, is a columnist for the London *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, *The Spectator*, and *The Oldie*, which he helped to found. His recent autobiography, *Will This Do?*, is out in England.

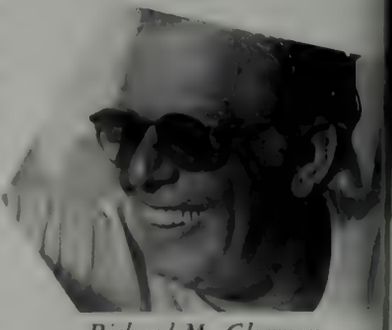
James Wolcott has appeared on the PBS series *Edge* and the BBC's *Late Show*. He has written for *Harper's*, *The New Republic*, and the London *Observer*.



Bob Colacello on Ivana's fairy-tale life after Trump, page 134.



Luisita Lopez Torregrosa on Imelda Marcos and her campaign for the Philippine presidency, page 84.



Richard M. Clurman on Time Warner's recently ousted C.E.O., Nicholas J. Nicholas Jr. page 60.



Gail Sheehy on Hillary Clinton, the engine inside the Clinton campaign, page 140.

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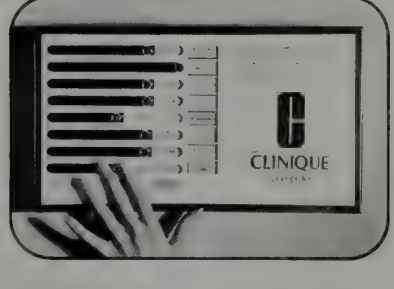
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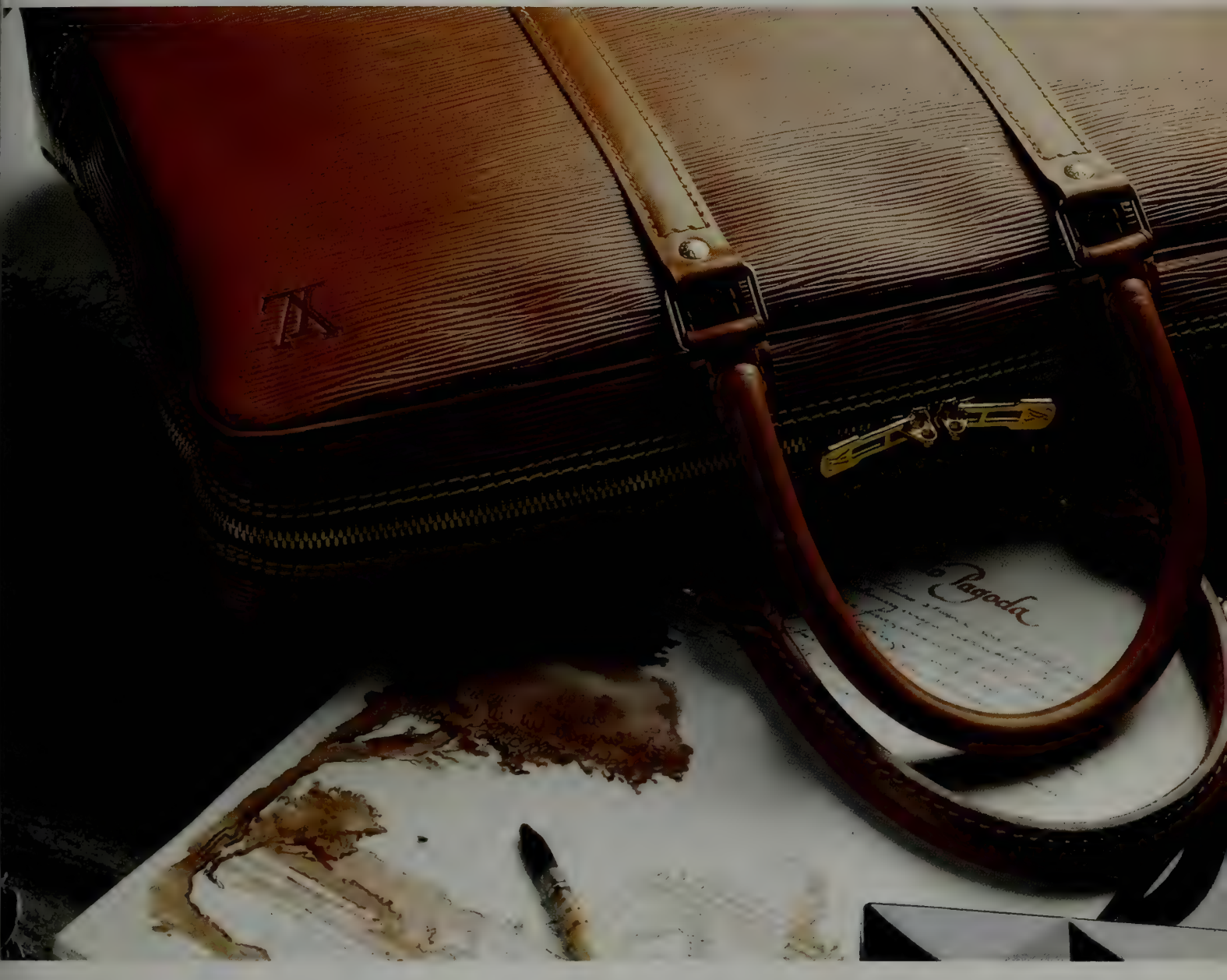
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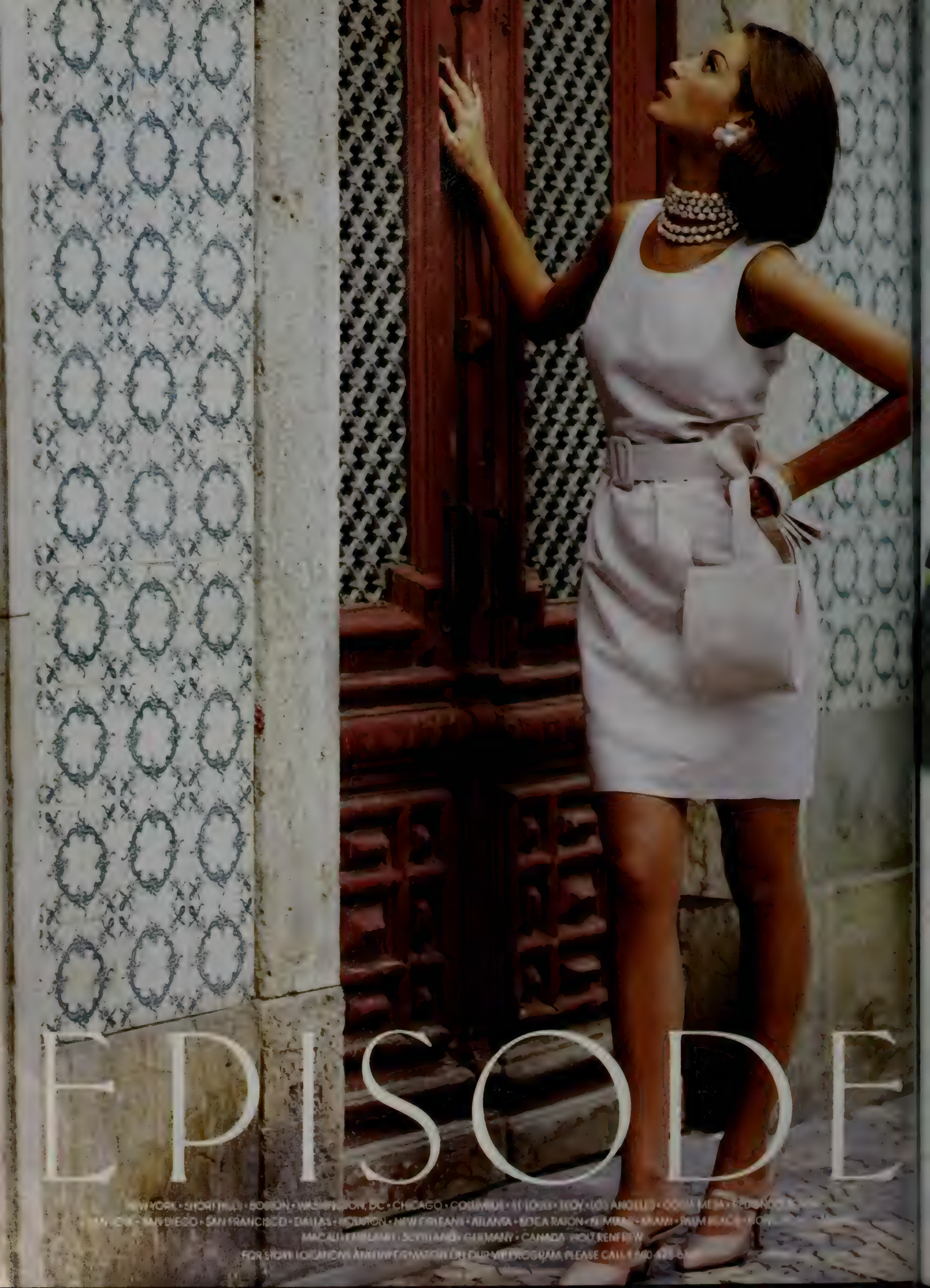
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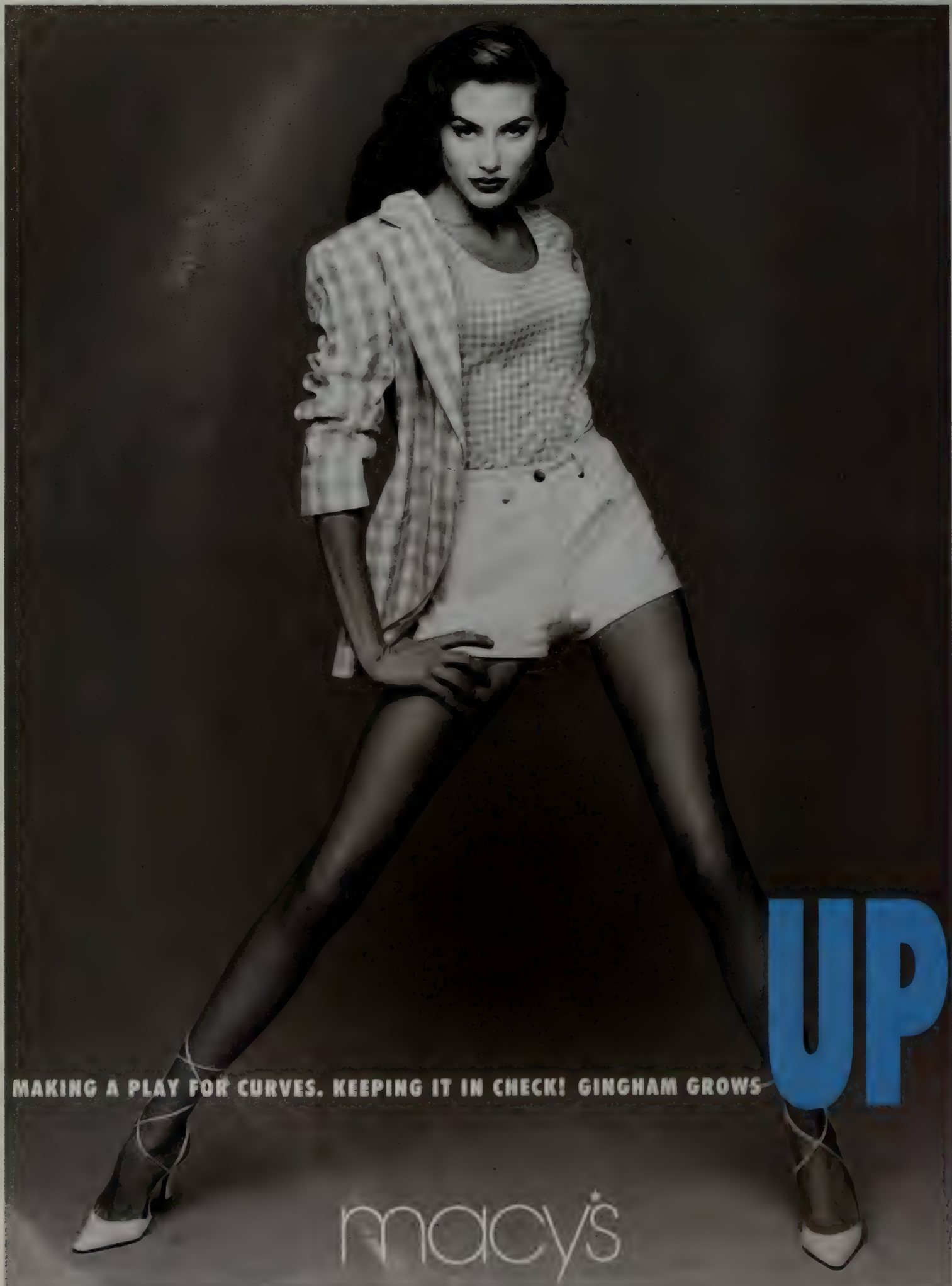

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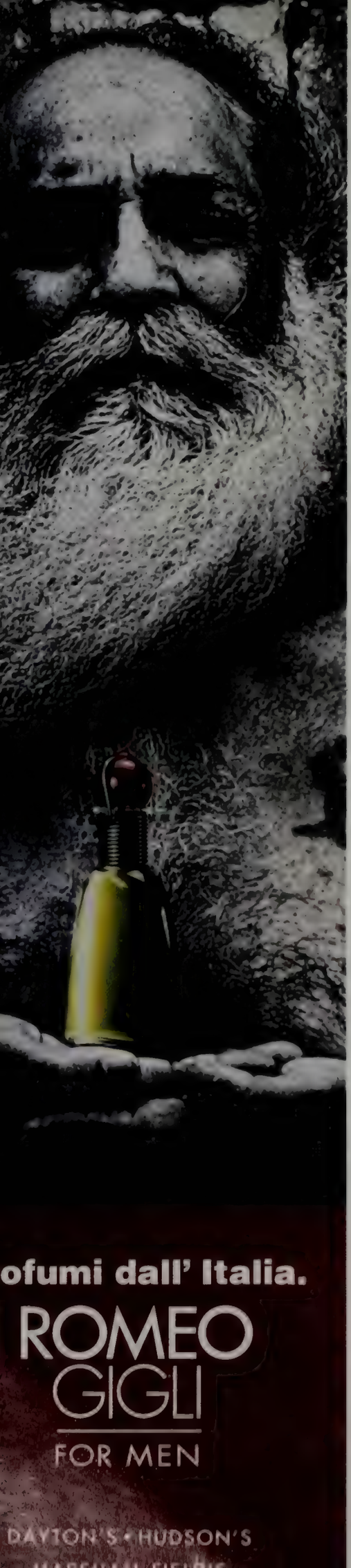
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Letters



READERS BITE BACK

Concealed Mike

Reading Peter J. Boyer's "The Lost Boy" [March], I felt that Mike Tyson is a modern-day Frankenstein—once a man, now a monster, created by a frenzied American culture steaming with excesses of violence, sex, and greed. Like all monsters, Tyson elicits a schizophrenic response from the mob: sympathy from those who view him as a victim, and disgust from those who view him as a beast. His rape trial has provided an ending similar to that of the original Frankenstein story—the destruction of the monster and the shock to those who helped create him and then dined off the fat of his fame.

TRACIE C. FLOWERS
Cincinnati, Ohio

If it's true that young males look to Mike Tyson as a role model, then I think young females had better learn to box. Up against such a mentality, they're going to need it.

DAWN TALMADGE
Hershey, Pennsylvania

Casing Kunstler

I was very distressed that Ron Rosenbaum seemed to take so many of William Kunstler's claims at face value in "The Most Hated Lawyer in America" [March]. After all, Kunstler resorted to victim-blaming tactics during his defense of police shooter Larry Davis. Furthermore, Kunstler promoted additional violence against police officers when he told *The Village Voice*, "Any black guy that shoots six cops and puts the fear of God in police officers, I think is great." Is it any wonder that many people consider Kunstler a white racist?

JOHN FRANCIS FOX
Brooklyn, New York

It takes a true love of your fellowman to fight injustice and prejudice, as well as a big ego to believe you can make a difference. William Kunstler has more than his share of both, plus the intelligence and chutzpah to take on such a task. Helping the suppressed, forgotten, and wrongly accused requires guts. What a guy.

REGINA L. GREEN
Cavecreek, Arizona

After reading such remarks of William Kunstler's as "I think there are some people that do deserve to die," I started to wonder if in fact Kunstler has become part of the monster he tries so hard to save his clients from.

KEVIN SIMPSON
Calgary, Alberta

Palm Beach Fallout

Dominick Dunne's "The Verdict" [March] is the first balanced article that I have read on the William Kennedy Smith rape trial. While other women may choose to remain silent, Patricia Bowman's courage speaks volumes. She deserves our respect and support.

RUTH GENDREAU
Montreal, Quebec

In Dominick Dunne's interview with Patricia Bowman, he highlights her point that she passed "two polygraph tests and a voice-stress analysis." However, Dunne does not go on to explain why these tests were not admissible in court—because they are by no means a foolproof indication of someone's veracity. Bowman claimed she screamed that night but no one responded to her cries. All the people in the house said they heard no screams. After the alleged attack, Bowman said, she went back into the Kennedy house with Smith, even though she had testified she was afraid he might kill her.

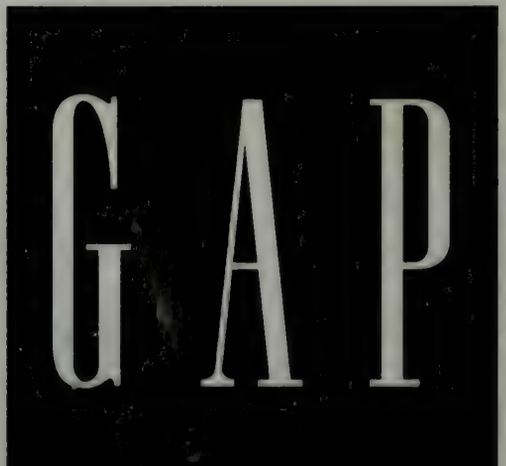
Many legal and rape experts have commented on the flimsy evidence

LISA BLACKSHEAR


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Letters

against Smith, including Susan Brownmiller, the feminist author of *Against Our Will*, a study of rape, who described it as "a weak case." Perhaps no one except Patricia Bowman and William Kennedy Smith will ever really know what happened that night.

JOAN LOWNDS
Waterbury, Connecticut

Patricia Bowman should know that there are many of us who believe her.

MARIANNE BAGGS
Charlotte, Vermont

This piece made me see red. Mike Tyson is more famous than William Smith, and he was found guilty. Why? Because the jury believed his accuser. Patricia Bowman was not believed. What about William Smith's life? Whether you believe he did it or not, he was found not guilty by a jury of his peers. That is "the verdict," and this is America.

DEBORAH TODD
Andover, Massachusetts

I give Patricia Bowman credit for coming out from behind the blue dot. Women such as Patricia Bowman, Anita Hill, and Desiree Washington keep us more anonymous women on track.

VICTORIA CUNHA
Chicago, Illinois

Two rape cases in your March issue: William Kennedy Smith and Mike Tyson. One is white, the other black. One is college-educated, the other never finished high school. One grew up in privilege and power, the other in a ghetto nightmare. Yet the themes are all too similar. Both young men exhibited troubling behavior and attitudes toward women for many years, problems that were bound to cause great harm to themselves and others if not attended to. But nobody around them attended to these problems until it was too late.

LINA ACCURSO
Port Chester, New York

Maxwell House

I would like to respond for my compatriots, who I felt were maligned by Betty Maxwell's comments in Edward Klein's article "The Sinking of Captain Bob" [March]. My husband's entire pension was tied up in a Maxwell fund; now, with just ten years to retirement, we are told there is only sufficient money to cover payments to current pensioners, leaving nothing for those still to retire. We British are not, as Mrs. Maxwell apparently believes, entirely unfeeling regarding her family's loss and grief. However, as the enormity of the effects of her husband's "borrowing" of the pension funds was revealed, scant sympathy was extended to Maxwell's financially distressed employees by his family. The labeling of the British press as reptiles is ironic, coming from the wife of a man who in his lifetime was so determined to own part of it! As for Kevin and Ian, it has been said that they were bullied by their father. However, they are not children, but grown men, with the moral obligation to answer for their actions. They could have built careers outside the Maxwell businesses, but they chose to accept the privilege afforded them by their name, and now must face the consequences of their decisions. Like Ghislaine, I hope that something good will come out of this mess, if it is only the assurance that a confidence trick of these dimensions can never happen again.

PAULINE HAMBROOK
Oxford, England

Owed to Mayakovski

I am *not* Vladimir Mayakovski's "illegitimate daughter," as Joan Juliet Buck states in her article on Tatiana Liberman ["The Émigré Muse," March]. I am his *biological* daughter, with twenty-three Mayakovski genes! My mother was *not* a Russian-American at the time she met my father. She was a Russian traveling on the passport of her estranged British husband, George E. Jones, who, knowing I was not his flesh and blood, did the gentlemanly thing. His name appears on my birth certificate. I was born of a passionate love relationship that consumed the poet during his 1925 stay in Manhattan. It was doomed from the start by circumstances outside my parents' control. Mayakovski's love for my mother, "Elly Jones," effectively ended his intimate relationship with Lili Brik. My name and address have been well known to the Russian intelligentsia since an article identifying me and substantiating my identity appeared in *Echo Planeta* in 1990. In the summer of 1991, my son Roger Sherman Thompson, a New York lawyer, and I went to Moscow, where we were welcomed by those in and outside Mayakovski's family circle, his friends, and his admirers.

PATRICIA J. THOMPSON
New York, New York

(Continued on page 38)


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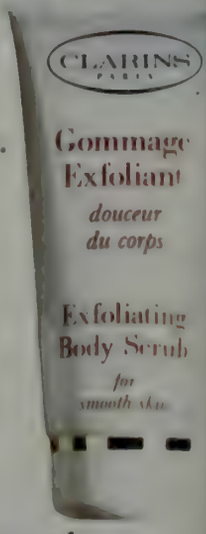


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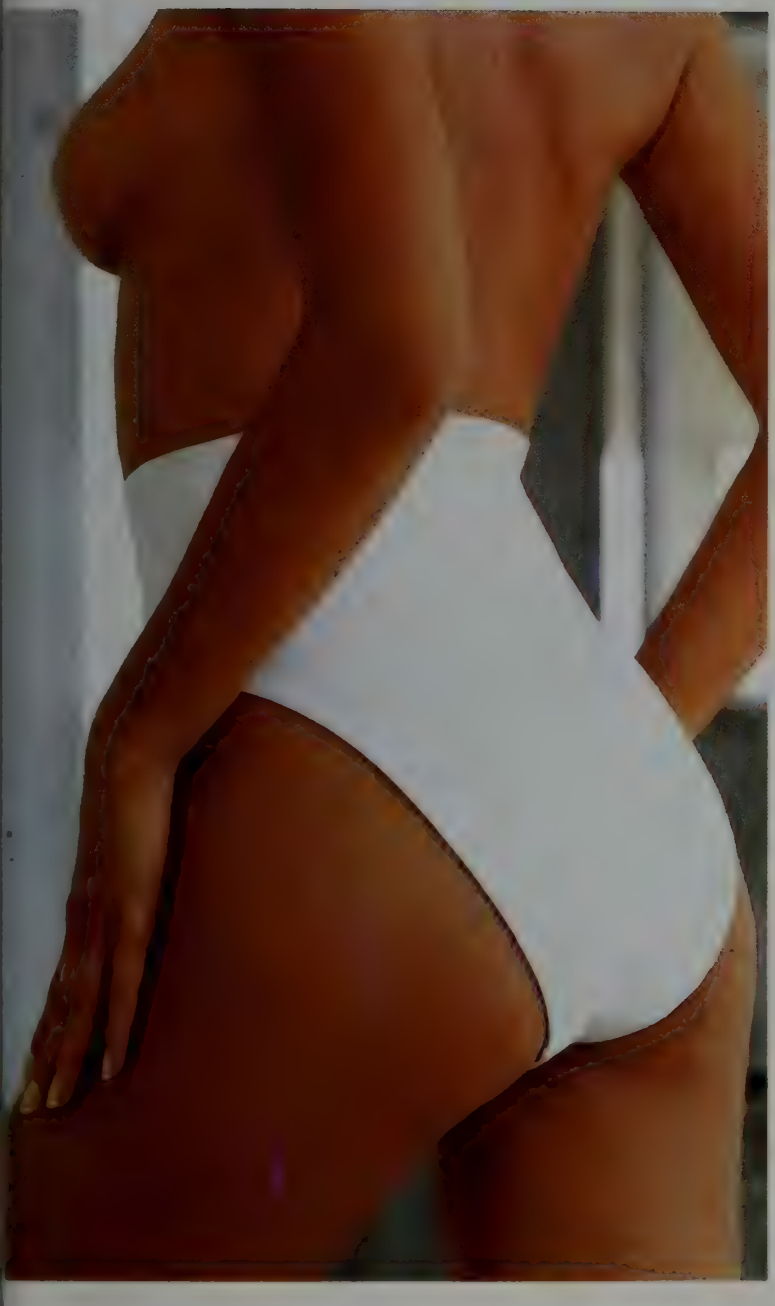
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Letters

Flaming Phoenix

Thank you for Ben Brantley's inspiring article on Phoenix House ["Phoenix Rising," March]. The testimonials prove that drugs do not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, religion, age, or economic status. They can consume your life no matter where you come from, who your parents are, or which school you attended.

ANITA D. ALBAN
Studio City, California

Through the stories of their recovered lives, the featured alumni become the dynamic through which an addicted society in denial can experience its own phoenix rising.

CLAUDIA SNOW GRONVALDT
Exeter, New Hampshire

Dworkin Woman

Reading "Burchill's Bite," by James Wolcott [March], I was stunned to find Julie Burchill's comment in reference to Andrea Dworkin's novel in which the heroine is raped: "Some girls have all the luck." Nice one, Julie. Yes, we all want to be raped and brutalized, don't we? This remark seems the more ironic, following as it does a paragraph in which Burchill berates feminists who say they don't hate men: "Don't debase yourselves this way." Burchill has achieved a significant position in British journalism and should think before making such an insensitive remark about rape, but it represents a side of her that is becoming increasingly obvious—one that is prepared to sacrifice intelligent comment for vacuous sound bites that consolidate her transient position as a controversial media darling.

LAURA QUEEN
Glasgow, Scotland

James Wolcott asserts that Andrea Dworkin "depicts all relations between men and women as gutter fighting" and "rape around the clock." As co-publisher of Four Walls Eight Windows, the U.S. publisher of Dworkin's novel *Mercy*, I had thought that recent events would have taken us beyond that kind of attack on a writer for simply raising issues of sexual violence in her work. Dworkin does not suggest anywhere that all relations between men and women necessarily revolve around violence. But she does choose as her subject women who have suffered violence at the hands of men, and she certainly does seek to gain insight from their experiences. In the process, she speaks for women, who live in a world that often confuses sexual violence with sex.

DAN SIMON
New York, New York

Tall, Dark, and Hampson

The photograph of baritone Thomas Hampson by George Lange in "Fanfair" [March] makes me smile every time I look at it. Friends sent it from Canada to raise me from postgraduate blues, and it certainly did the trick. I just hope that by describing Hampson's voice as "treacle-rich" Rupert Christiansen didn't mislead readers about the way Hampson sings, which is definitely treacle-free. He's proved that Korngold is not corny if sung with intelligence, and that we have not heard Brahms's "Wiegenlied" ("Lullaby") often *enough*. And his song programs remind us that Meyerbeer and Ives have a place in our concert halls just as Schubert does.

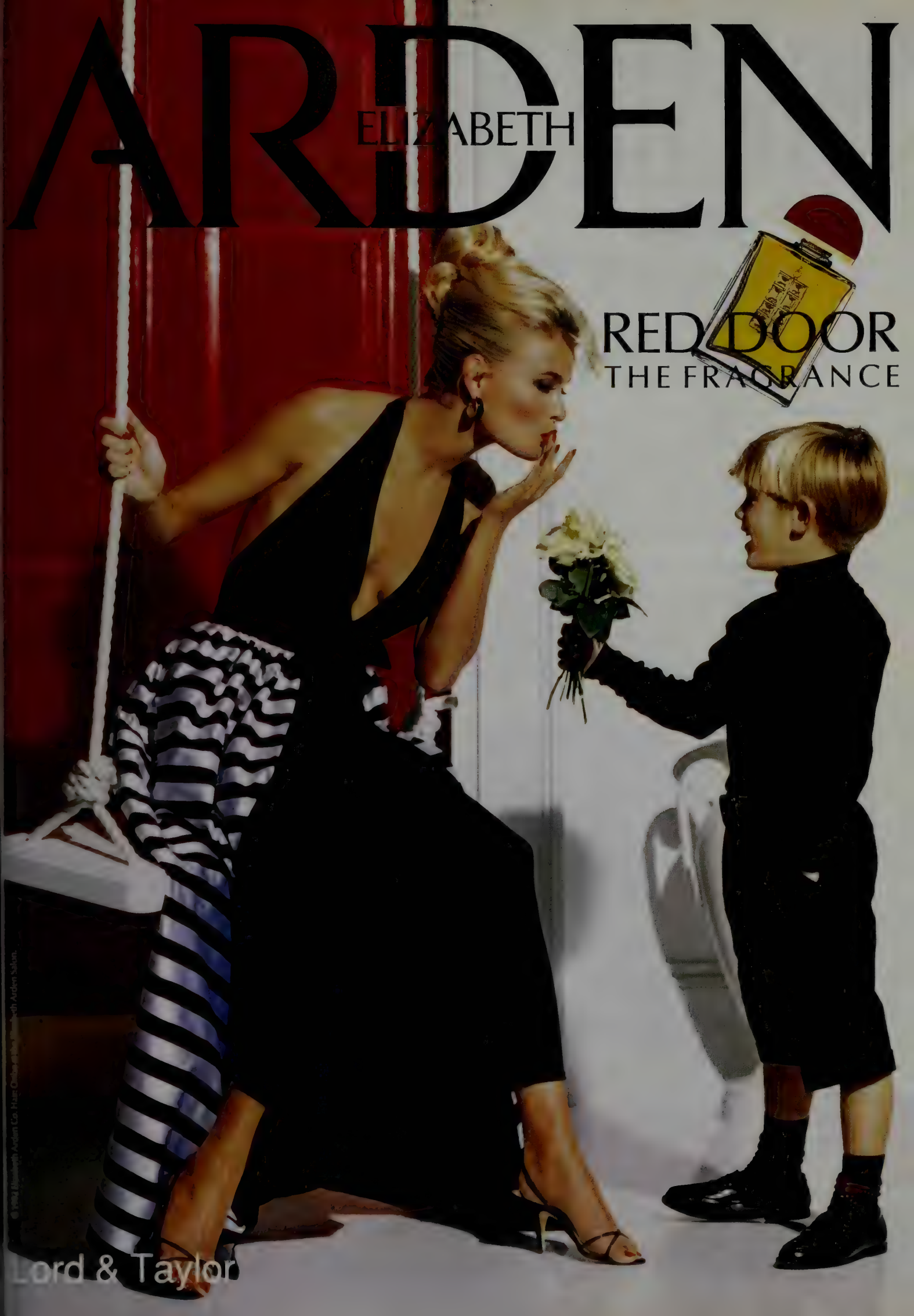
ANNE THACKRAY
London, England

Building a Reputation

Miriam Horn's word-wise and moving analysis of architect Antoine Predock ["The Rise of the Desert Rat," March] brought to mind an urban-design course Antoine and I taught together at the University of New Mexico in the late sixties. He and I and two students met one Saturday morning to carry out a charge from the architecture faculty to write by-laws setting out the rights of students, how to select an addition to the faculty, and other academic issues. After a few minutes, Antoine had had enough, and said he was leaving to go to his studio to do real work. I think that he made the right decision, and that more architects, urban designers, and city planners in similar situations should do the same. To quote Batman, "There is not a moment to lose, Robin."

WILLIAM WEISMANTEL
Gainesville, Florida

Letters to the editor should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to: The Editor, Vanity Fair, 350 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017. The letters chosen for publication may be edited for length and clarity.


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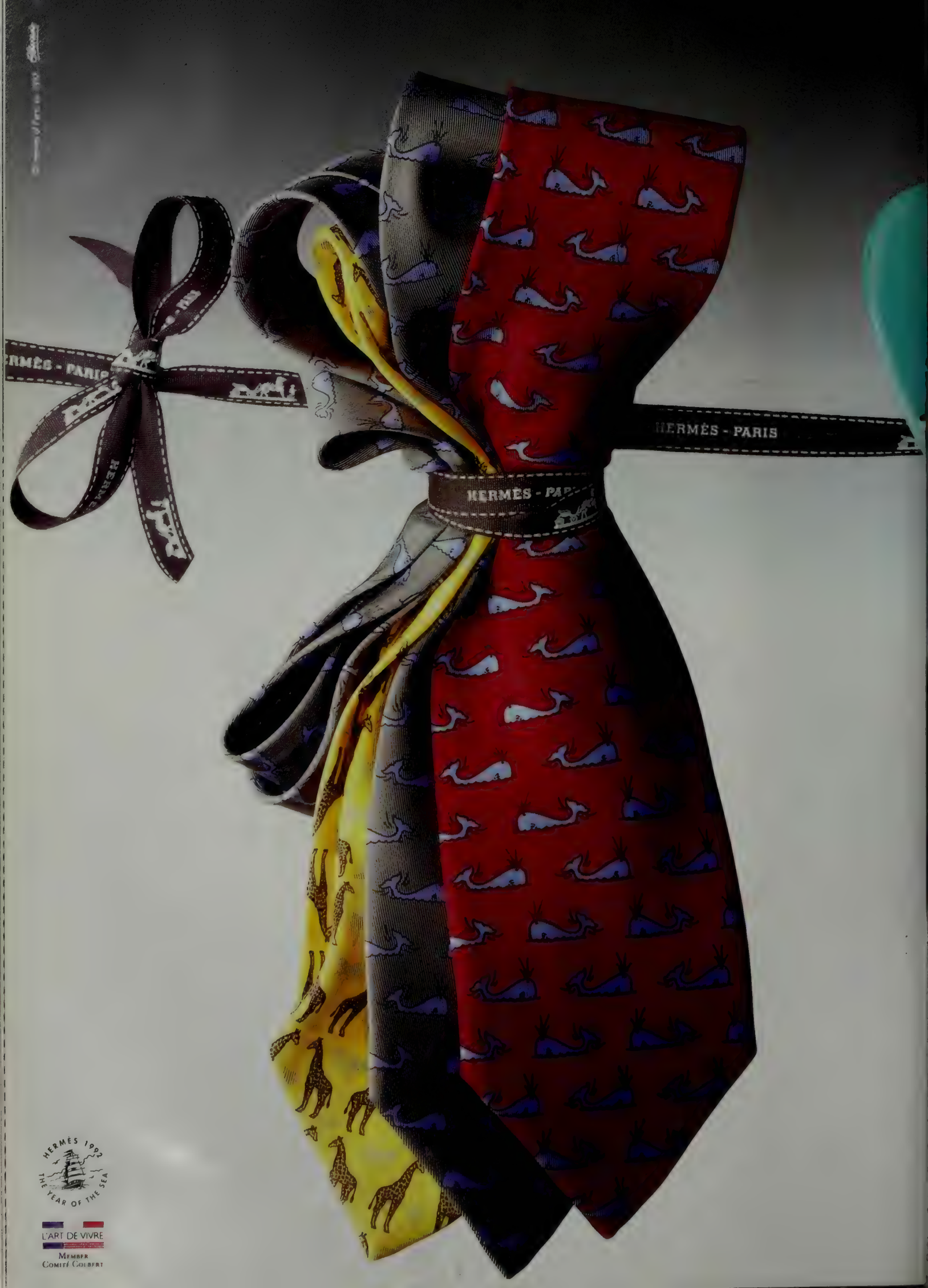


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CAMILLE DUVALL

Left: Five-time world champion water skier, TV commentator, author, and new mother, Camille is wearing a Danskin Pro color-block racing suit. $38

PATTY DODD

Center: Leading money winner on the Women's Pro Beach Volleyball Tour in 1989, former member of the Colombian Olympic Team, and bilingual kindergarten teacher in Lennox, California, Patty is wearing a Danskin Pro action back maillot. $34

NATHALIE SIMON

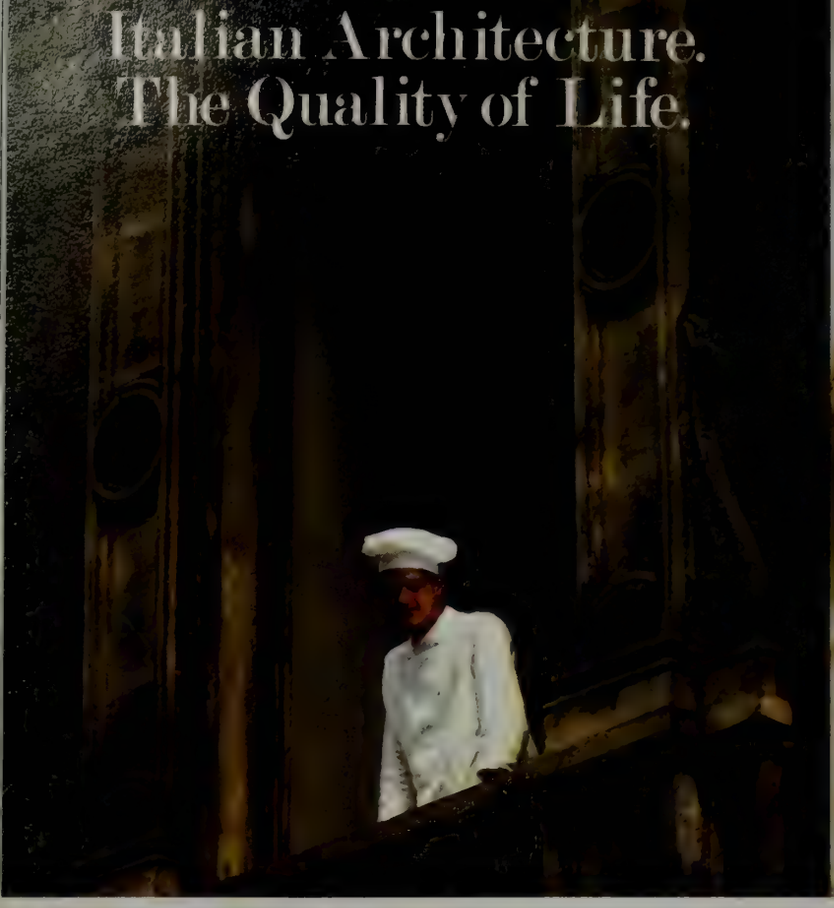
Right: Four-time French national windsurfing champion, currently ranked in the world's top three for slalom and course racing, and owner of SPORT-AWAY windsurfing and mountain biking tours, Nathalie is wearing a Danskin Pro print-block racing suit. $42

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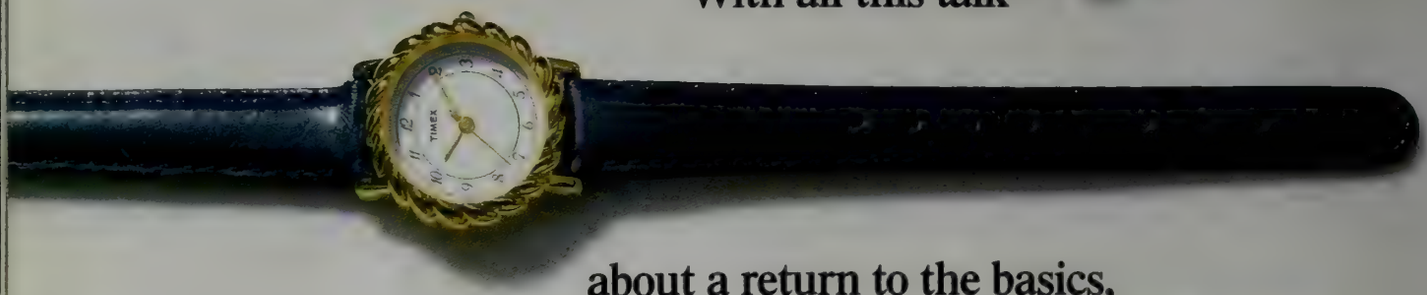


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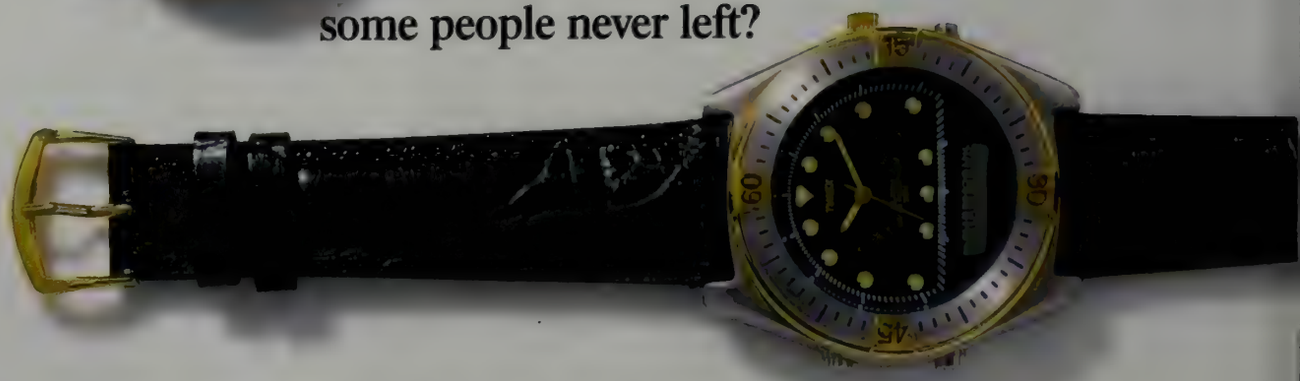
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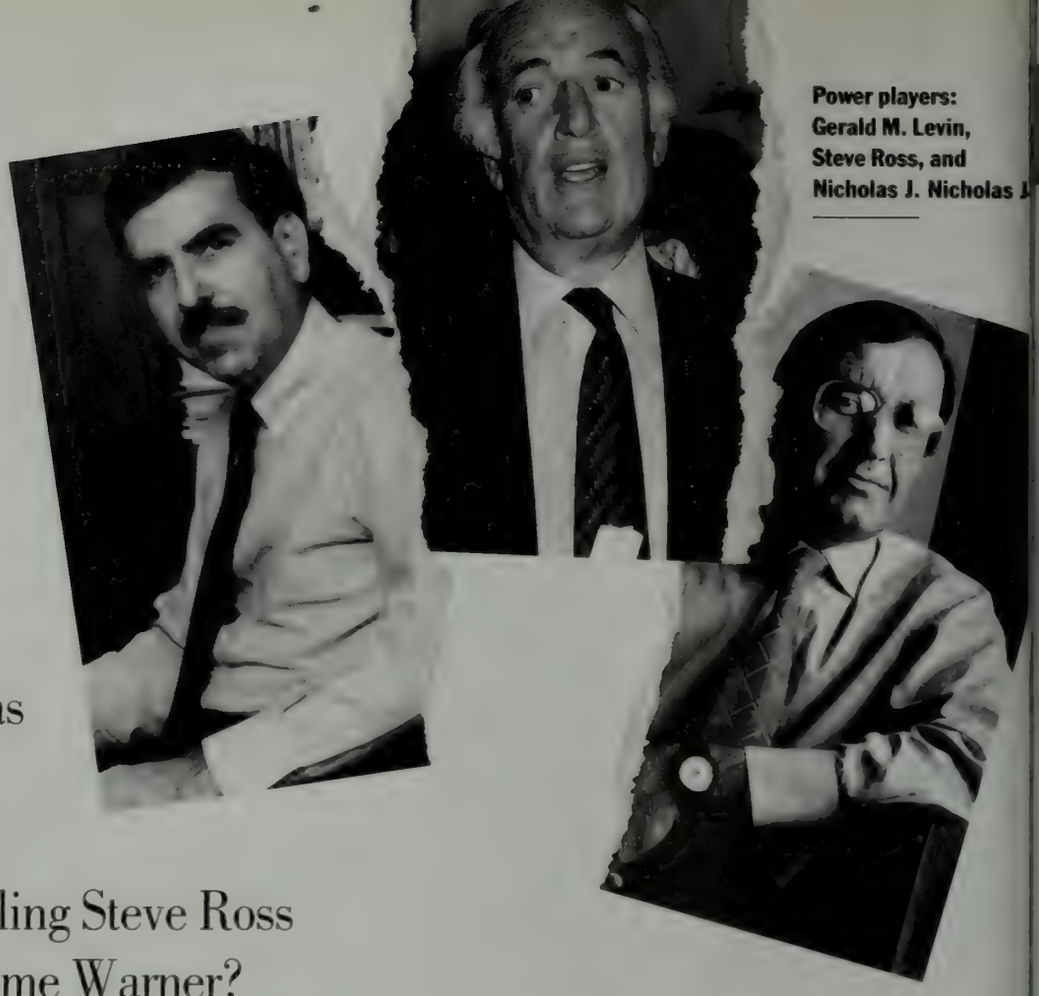
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Now that "Nick the Knife" Nicholas has been sacked, can Jerry Levin and the ailing Steve Ross really save Time Warner?

BY RICHARD M. CLURMAN

As noon approached one day in early March, Nicholas J. Nicholas Jr., a taut fifty-two, angrily paced his spacious Rockefeller Center office, a colorful de Kooning shining from its polished cherry-wood walls. Nicholas was enraged, yelling at visitors and barking into the phone. Just a few days earlier, in a secret struggle for power, he had been brutally ousted as president and co–chief executive officer of Time Warner, the world's largest media-and-entertainment conglomerate. It came as a career-killing blow to him, the sudden end of a lifelong dream. But there was nothing he could do about it: the man who had been known at Time Inc. for years as "Nick the Knife" finally had the knife turned on him.

When Time Inc. and Warner Communications merged two years ago, he thought he had an ironclad contract, backed by an oath "signed in blood" from Warner's persuasive, ingratiating chairman, Steven J. Ross. Both documents provided that Nicholas would be an equal partner with Ross and then succeed him in 1994 as boss of the multibillion-dollar company. Instead, Nicholas was forced out, with only one day's notice, by the company's twenty-three-member board of directors, with only one dissenting vote. Then the board unanimously voted to replace him with his old Time Inc. rival, Gerald M. Levin, also fifty-two.

I phoned Nicholas in his office. Could we talk? Nicholas's answer was polite but brisk and conclusive. "Nope. Nothing. I've decided that whenever I tell whatever I have on my mind I know who I'm going to tell and it ain't you."

His answer was chilly for good reason. The week before, I had published a book (*To the End of Time: The Seduction and Conquest of a Media Empire*) whose reporting predicted his downfall—based on painful accounts from colleagues of his abrasive executive style and on his own self-incriminating words. Why in the world should he agree to talk to me?

But—*mirabile dictu*—he did. Three hours later, I picked up my ringing phone to hear a hot, impulsive Nicholas. With little preface, rage rising in his monologue, he said portentously, "What's on my mind is that I know a lot, as you might surmise. Not only *why* what happened and *when* it did and the *way* it did, but I also know a lot of other things. What I'm going to do is eventually find someone to tell the story. I have a journalist in mind [Connie Bruck of *The New Yorker*]. It certainly won't be you. I have kept my mouth shut at the moment for a lot of reasons. Nobody has asked me to, but I have decided as a matter of personal conviction not to get into a pissing contest with this great spin bullshit they're putting out. I'm not talking to anybody for now. The sleaziness of the whole thing! I don't want to be associated with it until it is clear how sleazy it is. Nobody is onto this thing yet." Good-bye.

What was he talking about? In the corporate headquarters, the Time Warner Building, and half a block away in the Time & Life Building, as well as on the board's telephone grapevine, there were whispered reports tarring him. They said Nicholas was railing loudly behind the closed doors of the office he still occupied that there had been plots against him from the very beginning. Incredibly, they claimed that, among other nightmares he ranted about, Nicholas was saying that for all he knew Ross may have been in cahoots all along with Paramount's Martin Davis, whose unwanted hostile bid had forced Time to buy Warner for $14 billion, yielding Ross many millions more than he would have

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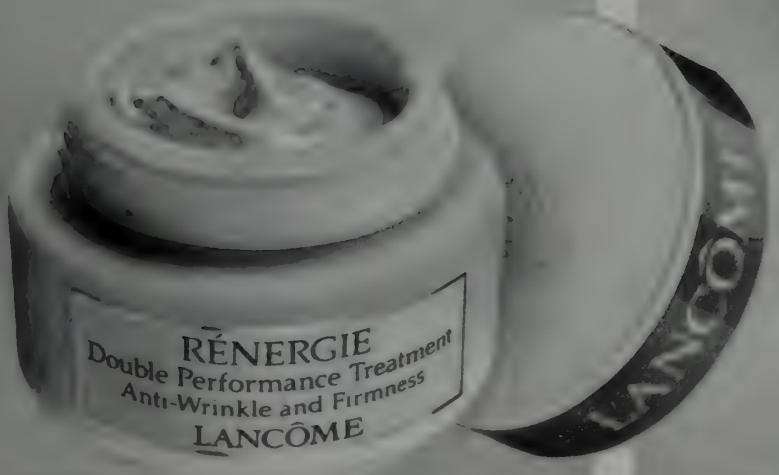
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received in the original deal. ("Someone must be kidding," says Davis. "That theory would be sick.") There were additional reports that Nicholas was fulminating about all kinds of other malign "conspiracies."

In fact, Time Warner insiders admit his ouster *was* a conspiracy. But its makings were not of the kind he darkly hinted at. Nicholas, they say, did himself in.

As the date of his ascension got closer, the sharply focused onetime financial whiz kid seemed to be racing to his goal, stopwatch and calculator in hand, knocking over every barrier. When there were disagreements with Ross and others, Nicholas could get downright disagreeable and explosive. Even secretaries in the office and other staff couldn't stand his turf wars or his abrupt manner. If press handouts didn't give Nicholas's partnership enough credit, he bitched. Magazine articles that failed to mention his name made him sulk. "To the world outside," a Time Warner director explained, "Ross is such a star that it's still kind of 'Nick who?' "

"I'm supposed to be the ice-water-in-the-veins guy," Nicholas said. "What am I going to do? Go around and deny it?"

The tension on top was so great that as long ago as late last fall Ross and Nicholas stopped communicating. When Ross had to take leave of the office to be treated for prostate cancer in November, intermediaries were confused by conflicting orders. Insiders say the ambitious Nicholas began acting like Alexander Haig when he announced on network television after the Reagan assassination attempt, "I am in control here." Many thought Nicholas—like Haig—was out of control.

In fact, Nicholas's clashes with Ross were preordained almost from the day they came together in their warm, temporary embrace. Consider a description of the two from a friend of both, a senior member of the Time Warner board:

Ross. "He's 'the Great Schmooze.' An enormously effective personal salesman. Enormous! I've watched him in all kinds of situations. He has a warmth about him and a disarming, self-deprecating manner that's almost hypnotic. Eighty-five percent of it is real. Of course, we all have a little phoniness in us, and I'm not sure what Steve is really like when the doors are closed and he's by himself. But he has a wonderful style, a good listener, very diplomatic, sensitive. Steve has a tendency to talk you to death. One of his strategies of carrying the day is to exhaust you. He is not combative, just tenacious. Even though he wouldn't scream and holler at you, he doesn't let go."

Nicholas. "Nick is very tightly wound, intense, sometimes too intense, sometimes almost obsessed with his viewpoint. He's a better talker than a listener, sometimes too confident, too cocky, too self-assured. He has all the smarts. But I sometimes get a little concerned with his humanity. There's always been a dark side to Nick. He doesn't easily accept the fact that there are other bright people around. Nick tries to do everything himself, so he hasn't got time to be really nice to people. He's not as bad as he sometimes projects himself to be, but at times his ambition and his intensity get in his way."

Could there be a more incompatible couple?

Nicholas himself had diagnosed his potential problem long before his downfall. "I'm supposed to be the ice-water-in-the-veins guy," he said a year ago. "What am I going to do? Go around and deny it? I'm the ultimate realist. I don't think I'm the slightest bit mean.

"Not many people know me well," he added. "I've been self-reliant my whole life. I don't think people get me wrong because they know me. They get me wrong because they don't know me."

Nick Nicholas, the son of a Greek-born World War II hero who was a U.S. submarine captain, had been brought up as a hardworking navy brat. But on scholarships and loans he attended all the "right" schools: prepped at Andover, graduated from Princeton, earned an M.B.A. at Harvard, where he was spotted by a Time Inc. recruiter and hired as a lowly numbers man in the controller's office.

A shrewd analyst and planner, he artfully made his way up the Time ladder. He became assistant to the company president, and shone in Time's fledgling cable operation. He did so well that his mentor, Time Inc. chairman J. Richard Munro, made him chief financial officer of the whole company, and finally its president. Though Nicholas's climb had taken twenty-one years, he had maneuvered from job to job with swift self-assurance. He liked to quote Mel Brooks's 2,000-Year-Old Man, who, when asked his main means of locomotion, replies, "Fear. If you don't move quickly enough you get eaten."

Like his submariner father, Nicholas had always finely navigated his own career, leaving some bleeding casualties in his wake. One was his competitor for the top spot, Jerry Levin (pronounced like "begin"). When Nicholas was finally named president of Time Inc., in 1986, he saw to it that Levin, then an executive vice president, was thrown off the company's board. (After two years, Levin was restored to the board as vice-chairman, but by then Nicholas was in command.) Nicholas later shrugged off the power play: "There was a period of estrangement. Jerry had some brilliant ideas, but with no foundation under them to make them happen. That's not even an issue anymore because he's terrific with people and he's much better at running things today. The caricature of me is that I'm a great operator and a lousy dreamer. The truth is I'm a hell of a dreamer and a damned good operator and so is he."

"At the time, Nick had a fairly mechanistic way of looking at the world," Levin recalled with barely concealed resentment. "I think Nick acted too quickly. Nick liked and wanted the exercise of power. Those things are fundamentally inimical to me. I'm not— Nick had a different set of characteristics."

Different indeed. As one friend of both put it, "Nick is as opposite in outlook from Jerry as Thomas Hobbes ["The life of man . . . nasty, brutish, and short"] was from Socrates ["The unexamined life is not worth living"]."

The son of devout Russian-Romanian immigrant parents, Levin, whose father sold groceries, aspired to be a rabbi. A philosophy and literature student at Haverford College, he changed his mind and instead went on to earn an LL.B. from the University of Pennsylvania Law School. At a white-shoe Wall Street law firm, he worked on big civil-rights and First Amendment cases under eminent advocate Whitney North Seymour Sr. He was recruited by the superplanner David Lilienthal, once chairman of the


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New Deal's Tennessee Valley Authority and later of the Atomic Energy Commission, who sent him off to work on massive irrigation and electrification projects in Iran: When he returned in 1972, he joined Time's struggling, infant cable operation. He became HBO's visionary, transforming it into the biggest pay-TV cable network by blanketing the U.S. with satellite-borne signals.

"There's no one in the world I love more than Jerry," says former Time chairman Dick Munro. "He's like a son to me. He's the most irreverent son of a bitch I've ever met." Nonetheless, Munro passed him over in favor of Nicholas, fearing Levin had neither the financial experience nor the executive toughness to run the company.

Though he was exiled to the backwater of "strategic planning" when Nicholas took over, Levin ended up rescuing the company's "transforming transaction," the Time Warner merger. After the complex deal had collapsed, he glued the intricate pieces back together and shepherded the merger to its rocky conclusion.

Ironically, in Time's long quest through the 1980s to form a partnership with another company, every potential deal had foundered on the nonnegotiable demand that Nicholas had to be the C.E.O. of the new company, to carry on "the Time Inc. tradition." When the merger possibility with Steve Ross and Warner appeared, it too crashed for the same reason. When Ross ultimately agreed, Munro, the Time board, and Nicholas himself thought they had sealed it with an elaborate fifteen-year contract that described the succession process by date and number. Incredibly, what not one of them—except Levin—realized until long after the deal was completed was that in the fine print of the complex merger agreement they had missed the point. What they had signed was only a money contract, not a guarantee of Nicholas's succession. As one Time director described the belated discovery, "Nick will inherit the job. But he won't if he doesn't earn it."

From the day Levin's dream offspring, Time Warner, was delivered, January 10, 1990, it was treated like an unwanted bastard. The stock of the combined company plummeted to half Time Inc.'s pre-marital value; front-page headlines of the world press shouted, ANOTHER FIASCO AT TIME WARNER, and TIME STUMBLES; and even inside the company the combination was despised ("a marriage made in hell"). The new company, hobbled by an $11.5 billion debt as a result of the merger, just couldn't do anything right. When its own *Fortune* listed the three hundred most admired companies in the U.S., Time had nosedived from a radiant 6th place in 1984 to a humiliating postmerger 242nd.

In public, co-C.E.O.'s Steve Ross and Nick Nicholas seemed to start their working relationship with all the finesse of a figure-skating pair in a media Olympics. But Nicholas was already betraying early signs of impatience. When I asked him how Ross was adjusting to working with a full partner for the first time, Nicholas responded with customary hubris: "He has to adjust. He doesn't have to defer, he has to share. Steve will often say, 'I haven't talked to Nick on this one, but here's what I think.' " When they did talk strategy, Nicholas was more for hunkering down, selling assets if need be; Ross insisted on expanding by taking in new partners.

Nicholas cut out, refusing even to attend planning sessions. He isolated himself in his office, bitter at being overruled.

The personal tension reached its apogee late in the summer of 1991 when Ross again tried to make good on his widely publicized promise to find what he calls, "you should excuse the expression, strategic alliances" to reduce the company's debt. Toshiba and the Japanese trading company C. Itoh offered more than a billion-dollar investment if they could share in some of Time Warner's movie and cable profits. Nicholas had often balked at taking such a "haircut." Minority partners, he had said, "are not going to pay what the assets are worth." Ross wanted to go ahead. Nicholas cut out, refusing even to attend the planning sessions. He isolated himself in his office, bitter at being overruled. Nicholas's opposition to the Japanese deal stalled it for four months, possibly costing the company, *Time* reported, "an extra $100 million to $200 million" before it closed.

Ross calls himself a dreamer. He relied on his financial metaphysician, Israeli-born Oded "Ed" Aboodi, to translate his dreams into numbers. Levin, who had become Aboodi's soul mate during the merger negotiations, shared a flexible approach to business strategy. Nicholas, structured and didactic, was odd man out. The whirlwind Ross-Aboodi combination didn't require much help from Nicholas, who found Aboodi's presence especially discomforting.

At first Ross tolerated the differences diplomatically, admiring over Nicholas's sulking shoulders the skills of soft-spoken, passionate Jerry Levin. Ross, said another director, "was a real believer in what Jerry could do for this company." Journalists close to the company began making bets on how long Nicholas would last before Levin came in.

When Ross got sick last November, Nicholas began acting more overbearing. The reality of Nicholas running the company alone—possibly soon—rose like an ugly dawn. If Ross indeed was not to come back as a result of his illness, it seemed inconceivable to many, including old Time directors on the board, that Nicholas would be able to run the company.

Levin himself could no longer imagine playing Don Quixote in a kingdom ruled by Nicholas. Levin's wife had told him that she had always been so proud of him when he worked for Time Inc., but now that it was Time Warner she no longer felt that way. Over Christmas at their Vermont retreat, Levin later told fellow Timeincers, he read the galleys of my book, which reports many harsh criticisms of Time Warner. After he finished reading, he said, he took "a walk in the woods" and decided Time Warner had to be "fixed."

Ross had come to the same conclusion. His wife, Courtney, who had cut short an around-the-world tour to be at her husband's bedside, complained to Levin that Ross's health was not being helped by all the executive tension. Levin visited Ross in his sprawling East Hampton house. Quietly, Ross and Levin decided that Nicholas had to go. Ross, who refuses ever to fire anyone himself, left most of the heavy work of persuading the board of directors to Levin and Arthur Liman, the superstar lawyer who is also Ross's closest confidant and godfather to his daughter. A majority of the befuddled, feckless directors who had come from the Time board were ignorant of the inner workings of



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the company and easy to turn around. Former Time chairman Dick Munro, who had promoted Nicholas, had on his own reluctantly concluded that Nicholas had changed for the worse in his new role.

By the time Nicholas got word of the coup against him, it was too late. Donald S. Perkins, chairman of the Time Warner board's governance and nominating committee and a onetime stalwart Nicholas advocate, phoned him in Vail, Colorado, where Nicholas was on a skiing holiday with his psychotherapist wife. *Fortune* later reported that the unflappable Perkins began, "Are you sitting down, Nick?" After he heard he was being forced out, the magazine said, "Nicholas was so shocked and saddened . . . that, when she saw him, his wife, Lynn, thought that a member of the family had died."



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Nicholas was invited to argue his case before the board and was offered a plane. He checked his own sources and found that any directors he might have swayed would have been overwhelmingly outvoted by the board's solid wall of Warnerites and disaffected Timeincers. Wisely, he stayed with his family in their snowy Vail bunker.

In theory, Ross presided over the emergency board meeting the next day. Although vice-chairman Martin Payson ran it, Ross was present on a speakerphone. The board, which met for only a little over an hour, was nearly unanimous in its vote to dismiss Nicholas. (Only Henry Luce III, son of Time's co-founder, dissented, urging more due process.) In an uncontested vote, the board installed Levin in Nicholas's place.

The board solemnly agreed, in "deference" to Nicholas's feelings and reputation, to keep their mouths shut about his ouster (which, of course, they failed to do) and give as the official reason "strategic differences."

The details of Nicholas's financial settlement were not worked out. (Nicholas had requested an office in the Time & Life Building as his Elba. No way, said a horrified Time Warner officer.) In purely financial terms, one option had been written firmly into his existing contract: Nicholas could technically remain an employee of the company for the next twelve years, accumulating as much as $30 to $50 million or more, including his present stock options and annual bonuses, for doing nothing. (This was in addition to the estimated $16 million in stock he owned at the time of the merger.) He had lost only his job, not the rewards that went with it.

More likely, he will choose to get on with his life and take the lump-sum payment his contract guarantees, estimated to be worth, with his options, $30 to $35 million (not the $15 million widely reported), in addition to a continuation of all his lavish benefit programs (life and medical insurance, etc.).

One longtime Nicholas friend and associate concluded, "Nick knew the lyrics of Time Inc., but he never really understood the music." On the thirty-fourth floor, where Nicholas once cracked his whip, one of his former subordinates was harsher: "Ding, dong, the witch is dead." Another staffer offered an elegant but equally unsentimental epitaph: "The Iceman Goeth."

Nicholas's sudden removal was greeted almost everywhere with cheers and the self-righteousness of hindsight. Wall Street applauded by jacking up the company's battered stock by close to ten points. From the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills Hotel to the tables down at Mortons, Hollywood wise guys happily danced on Nicholas's grave. An overconfident "suit," one of them called him, "an amateur strutting on our turf." (Cynically, they began speculating on how long Levin would last before one of their own was put in. "Levin is very smart," said one lawyer, "but not big enough to lead that company.")

No one clapped louder than the journalists and publishers in the Time & Life Building, headquarters for the company's magazine and book publishing, where Nicholas had honed his cost-cutting reputation. (Reducing costs "isn't going to end," he had recently announced in a menacing tone, explaining the layoff of some six hundred magazine staffers. "It's now part of the way we do business.") Not only had the magazines been reduced to a small wedge of profit in the whole showy entertainment-and-cable company, they had been orphaned and left leaderless. Their staffs and budgets had been cut; their morale was at an all-time low. The standard-bearing magazines had been charged with forfeiting their independence, ignoring the activities of their parent company, or running self-serving, censored coverage.

Worse, for the first time in their history the magazines were being ruled by a bottom-line businessman, Reginald K. Brack, a Nicholas protégé. Brack dominated the editor in chief, who in the past had always been the most powerful publishing figure. But that exalted throne was now occupied by the almost invisible Jason McManus, whose wavering leadership earned little respect from his managing editors or their staffs.

The journalists felt liberated when they heard that Nicholas's replacement was Jerry Levin. At first glance, Levin may seem an unlikely editorial hero, since he's never worked as a reporter or editor a day in his life. Virtually unknown to the world outside and barely acquainted with most of the journalists at Time Inc., he nonetheless knew every symbolic button to push. One of Levin's calls after the surprise announcement of the coup was on the venerated Andrew Heiskell, chairman of "the old Time Inc." for twenty years. In the lean-and-

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mean late eighties, Heiskell's successors, led by Nicholas, had evicted Heiskell from his retirement office and taken down his company-commissioned oil portrait. Now Levin arrived in Heiskell's tiny rental office to redress the heavy-handed ingratitudes, which had become public knowledge. Too late to restore the portrait to its place of honor, since it had been donated to the New York Public Library (where he had also been chairman). Instead, Levin invited Heiskell to occupy a "nice office in the Time Warner Building." Heiskell agreeably declined the gesture. But overnight, board minutes and budgets, from which Heiskell had been cut off, began coming his way again.

Levin summoned the managing editors of the magazines to the *Time*-magazine conference room—not the executive floor, where they had become accustomed recently to being summoned to receive bad news. Next, in rapid succession, floor by floor, Levin met with the editorial staffs of the magazines and book publishers. Addressing each group quietly, without notes or histrionics, he seemed, said one editor, more like "Woody Allen, pulling on his ear, looking at the floor, than the programmed business guys we usually hear."

"When Steve doesn't say someone he works with is the most wonderful person in the world, you know there's trouble."

Levin, who barely mentioned Nicholas, had not come to replay the plot that had deposed him. Instead, the new company president wanted to discuss the future. It was a new era, Levin declared, or actually the reaffirmation of an old one. The magazines were the "heart and soul" of Time Warner, he said, and they had been badly treated since the merger, demoralized, forced to concern themselves too much with profit margins, budgets, and rates of return. But the cost-cutting and layoffs would not be "a way of life" (as Nicholas had warned). "Those kinds of layoffs died last week," he pledged. He wanted Time Warnerites to bring more love to their work. "By love I don't mean eros but agape," he explained, spiritual not sexual love. "Whoever heard a C.E.O. use the word 'agape'?" exclaimed an editor after a meeting.

In front of the managing editors, he obliquely chastised editor in chief Jason McManus for not being visible enough. He told the stoic McManus he needed to represent the values of the company's journalism, to step forward more assertively and reconsider his "consensus"-style management. Instead of resigning because of the polite dressing-down, McManus hopped on the accelerating bandwagon. "I have a new assignment," editors say he announced. "This is a new age. The real beginning of the merger. I find it immensely liberating. I hope you will, too."

As Levin made his rounds, he passed a receptionist on the executive floor, who blurted out, "Thank you, you're making us all feel important again."

Was Levin too good to be true? Were they being conned again, this time by a quiet new cheerleader who had read as many books as they had and spoke their language? None of the notoriously skeptical journalists seemed to think so. "If he was pandering," said one editor, "at least he knew who to pander to."

Most remarkably, *Time* and *Fortune* both ran stories about the uproar with all the energetic reporting and candor they could muster. When the Time Warner merger had been announced, Jason McManus had blotted his reputation by preventing *Time* from reporting the story at all. (Levin alone among the high command had opposed McManus's decision.) Not this round; McManus didn't even see the stories about Nicholas before they were published.

COUP AT THE TOP, proclaimed *Time*. "Officially," the magazine said, "Nicholas resigned. . . . In fact, he was ousted in a coup conducted, he angrily told friends, in banana-republic fashion." In a story headlined AFTER THE COUP AT TIME WARNER, *Fortune* sharply raised the question of why the "not-so-independent board" had again been so uninformed about the problems in the Ross-Nicholas relationship and on the magazines. *Time*'s and *Fortune*'s stories were the most honest, critical coverage the magazines had ever been allowed to run about their parent company, "making up for past sins," as one critic observed. ("And we even ran favorable reviews of your book in both magazines," one senior executive proudly pointed out to me.)

There were other, less public signs of the change. Some of the uniquely harsh demands that management had been making in the Newspaper Guild negotiations were immediately dropped. The development of a new magazine (working title: *Globe*), which had been blocked for months because there was "no money" for it, was suddenly resumed with new funds. Preliminary dummies of the "new, redesigned" *Time*, due to come out in the late spring, were discreetly unveiled to a wider circle of company alumni. And the consensus was agreeable surprise. The magazine, they concluded, was not heading downstream—as many feared—but was actually more faithful to its news-and-ideas mandate than its showy makeup had made it appear in recent years.

Privately, Levin worried about raising expectations too high. "But he couldn't have started out better," one senior editorial executive said, a sentiment echoed in the halls of the Time & Life Building and its outposts around the world. "It was," said one impressed alumnus, "like the Prague Spring with no Russian tanks even in sight."

Steve Ross, racked by pain, deadened by Percocet, was sitting in a straight-backed armchair in the dark, cavernous living room of his Park Avenue duplex. He was tieless, his hair disheveled, not coiffed the way it has been most days of his meticulously attired life. Over his knees, covering his slippered feet, was a tan camel-hair shawl.

It was on the eve of bleak November, and he had invited me to spend some time with him, to continue our interviews for my book—even though for the last week he had been lying in agony on his bed upstairs, strapped in traction for what he described as an ailing back. I had explained in advance that I didn't want to intrude on his discomfort, but Ross had insisted.

Unfailingly polite, he half struggled to rise from his chair as I walked in. While still standing, I again urged that the interview was unnecessary and that he should go back to bed. "No," he said, squirming, "this probably takes my mind off my back. Up there it's all I can think about. This is a welcome distraction. Make yourself comfortable on the couch."

Then he explained that some years ago he had had a disk removed to cure a bad back. Now the pain had returned. A butler appeared, surprisingly dressed in

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a double-breasted blue pin-striped suit, like a gofer out of *The Godfather*. He deposited a silver tray with coffee, grapes, cheeses, and crackers alongside my tape recorder. Ross had long since become accustomed to its blinking red on-light in hours of past interviews.

As Ross eased his weight from one side of the chair to the other, I began with a few easy questions. Then, for the first time, he acknowledged the palpable tension between him and Nicholas, which I had discovered from other sources. He said yes, there were routine "differences of opinion." Whenever I'd asked him in the past how they were getting on, Ross had dissembled, invoking his favorite adjectives: "It's really a fantastic relationship, wonderful." (Dick Munro correctly observes that "when Steve doesn't say someone he works with is the most wonderful person in the world, you know there's trouble.")

I explained that my book was about to go to press and I was obliged to ask him one very harsh question. "Please be my guest," he said in another of his oft repeated phrases. I asked hesitantly about a new and more credible revival of an old rumor, "that you have cancer. Is it true?" "No, without any equivocation," he replied with a half-smile.

It was then Ross's turn to ask questions. I told him that the book, which he would be reading in galleys within the month, reported all the bumps, glitches, and public embarrassments of the merger and its aftermath. A lot of people wouldn't come off very well—including him. "You and some others may never want to speak to me again," I said. "So long as it's factual," he said, "I'll have no complaints. But how is it rough on me?"

"Well, you always describe yourself as a dreamer," I answered, "and a journalist has to try to separate dreams from reality." He took the warning in stride, asked for no details, and said, "If you wrote what you honestly believe, it's O.K. with me."

"Tell me something as a friend," he said, making his customary assumption that anyone who was not a declared enemy had to be his friend. He wanted to know about "church and state," the traditional Time Inc. division between editorial (church) and business (state). "You know," he said with a pleading frown, "I've never spoken to any editor directly or through a third or fourth party about any stories in the magazines."

I mentioned that people had told me they thought he was getting bad advice—staying out of the Time & Life Building and not exposing the editorial staffs to his unique form of cheerleading and generosity. "My gut kept telling me to spend more time in the Time & Life Building," he allowed, even though his aides had advised him against it. "So it's my fault." (Disarmingly, Ross always feigns taking the rap himself whenever there is bad news.)

Ross, who never saw a budget or salary that couldn't be increased, said he felt strongly that the editorial and publishing people in the Time & Life Building had been treated badly and were "being screwed" financially. "Turn off the tape and I'll tell you what I'm thinking about doing." Off the record, he outlined some financial initiatives he was considering to improve the "pocketbook morale" of the company's print side.

"My gut kept telling me to spend more time in the Time & Life Building," Ross allowed. "So it's my fault."

He sought more information on what the book said about the decline of his reputation and the sinking morale in the Time & Life Building. "Tell me and save me the cost of buying a copy of the book," he joked. Then, name by name, he wanted to know what was reported about the people on the magazines. He listened with rapt attention because, as he put it, "I'm in a world I've never been in before." When his list came to McManus's deputy, the editorial director, Ross made his most affirmative personnel evaluation: "Dick Stolley, I really like him, he's terrific."

But Ross's strength was obviously waning. Without asking, I rose to leave, escorting him to the winding stairway leading to his bedroom upstairs. He ascended painfully, clutching the handrail. Over his shoulder he said, "Thanks for distracting me."

He allowed himself to be distracted once more—for a retrospective on Ross and the merger in *The New York Times Magazine*. Then, two days before Thanksgiving, his lawyer and intimate friend Arthur Liman phoned. Liman sounded uncharacteristically distraught. "You're the first call I'm making—and I'm making a lot. We're announcing in half an hour that Steve is beginning treatment for prostatic cancer, but Steve wanted me personally to call you first. One of the things that has caused him an enormous amount of anguish is that when he talked to you he denied it. They misdiagnosed his problem for several weeks. It's a stunner for him because he thought that the last thing in the world he would need is this treatment. The doctor I spoke to is very optimistic."

Senior politicians now must give brutally detailed reports about their health. The S.E.C. has no such imperative for C.E.O.'s. A strong case could be made that the leading figure in a huge public company with tens of thousands of employees and many more stockholders should be held to the same standard, even though it would violate the compassionate privacy rights accorded others. Time Warner board members have been heard to complain that they lack that kind of information about Ross.

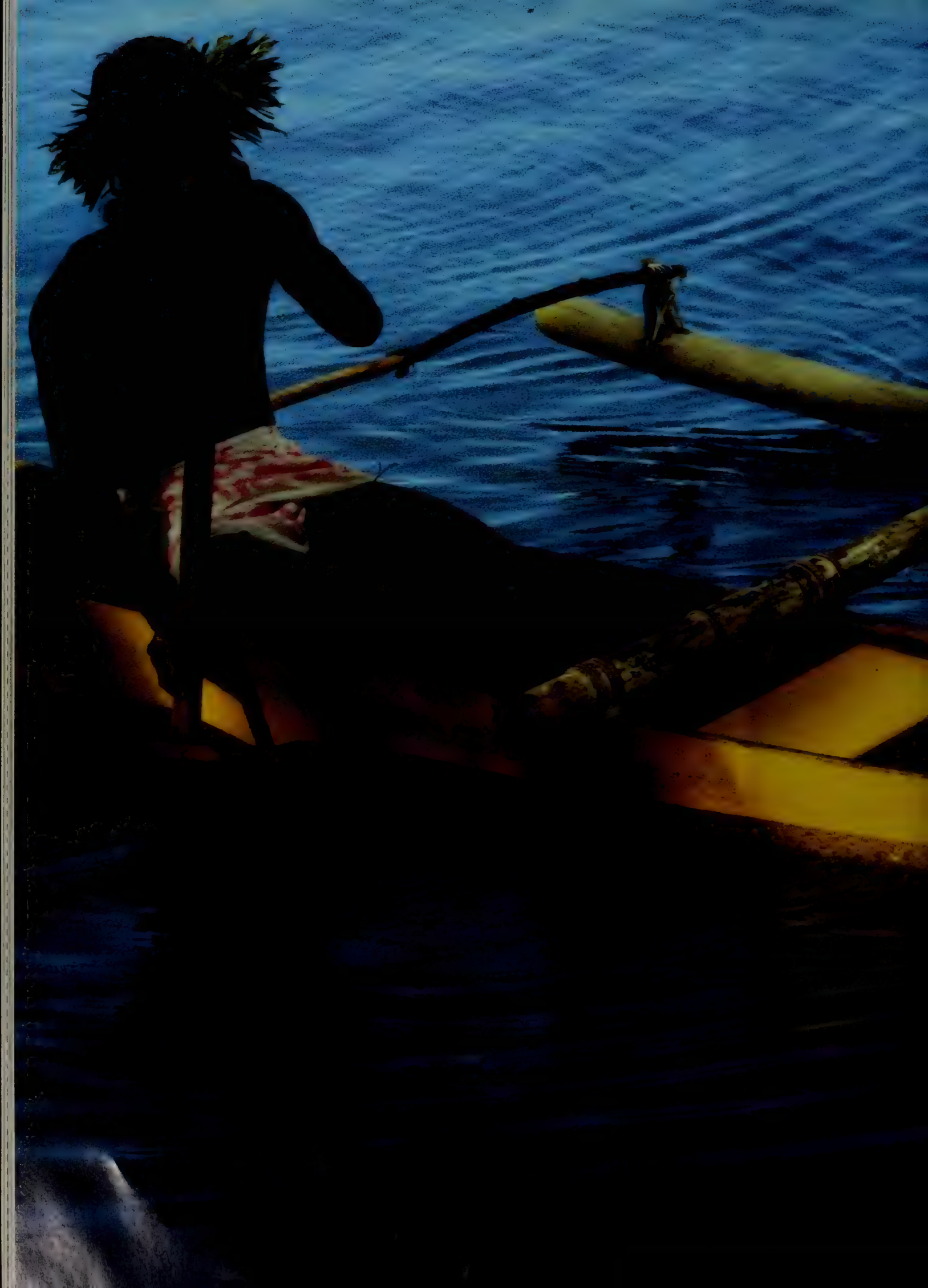
Today, Steve Ross, sixty-four, has settled into his East Hampton house and his Manhattan apartment, taking a course of six debilitating and risky chemotherapy treatments, each of which must be separated by twenty-one days. By early March he had completed three. He has temporarily lost his silver mane and has suffered transient infections, both common side effects of such therapy. Levin reports that a tumor pushing on Ross's spine, which caused the initial pain, has shrunk by 80 percent.

Between treatments, Ross summons up his energy to engage in his favorite activity, work. Even though he doesn't go to the office, he is frequently on the phone to associates and board members. His wife, along with his longtime assistant, Carmen Ferragano, who knows his every move and instinct, relays messages and instructions from him. Levin, who visits Ross, says that from what the doctors report he expects Ross back in the office this spring.

A new most happy couple? Who knows? Certainly this one has more potential for success—if Ross's treatment allows—than the unhappy two-year marriage of Ross and Nicholas. Says Levin optimistically, "Steve and I, Time and Warner, have a common purpose for the company. And it's a higher obligation than simply making money."

Does Levin really mean these lofty words? "You can be certain I do," he says. "My integrity is at stake." It sure is. □


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JOHNNY, WE HARDLY KNEW YE

As Johnny Carson bows out of the heat of *Tonight*, he takes the last cool breeze with him

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

"That plastic character on the Coast" is how S. J. Perelman dismissed Johnny Carson during one of his snit fits. Like most word-men, Ol' Picklepuss preferred rival Dick Cavett, who could play patty-cake with puns, lines of poetry, anagrams, palindromes. Carson? A mere cue-card reader.

America's night-light. A test pattern for lonely hearts. To culture's snooty squires, Carson has always been antiseptic to anything smacking of pungency. Even Kenneth Tynan in his famous adulatory profile of Carson in *The New Yorker* felt obliged to sigh, "It is depressing to reflect that if Rabelais were alive today he would not be invited to appear on *The Tonight Show*."

Over the years such once fashionable put-downs have receded into the annals of received opinion. Perelman's fang marks and Tynan's love bites have both faded. The man has shown through.

"He's the cream of middle-class elegance, yet he's not a mannequin," the director Billy Wilder told Tynan. No life-size plastic replica could have hosted NBC's *Tonight Show* for nearly thirty years without becoming warped beyond recognition. No reasonable facsimile could have sustained such high wattage in the dismal hours of divorce, drunken arrest, and the death of a son. If Johnny Carson solos in the jet stream of American comedy—the earth below cigarette-burned with the crash sites of Cavett, Merv Griffin, Regis Philbin, Joey Bishop, Alan Thicke, Pat Sajak, and every other talk-show host who has engaged him in dogfight—it isn't because he's been on autopilot. His reign, which spans J.F.K. to *JFK*, reflects a washboard stomach of Wasp stamina and character. His professionalism has paved a shining path.

On May 22, Johnny Carson (born 1925) will pass the mike to a new generation, in the person of Jay Leno. Before *The Tonight Show* under Johnny Carson became a lost bit of Americana, I hithered to the NBC studios in Burbank, California, to pay homage. I journeyed to "beautiful downtown Burbank" with my head bowed, as befits a pilgrim. I only hoped I wouldn't mope home disillusioned. (I'm still at that impressionable stage.)

Aside from a few people of color, it's a long loaf of white bread formed in front of Studio One. The audience queued for *The Tonight Show* looks like Carson cloned. Or, rather, Carson if he had remained a bumpkin from Nebraska. The men shuffle as if they'd left their lawn mowers behind. Their wives inch forward with locked hips. America being a land of crazed loners (before killing John Lennon, Mark David Chapman considered targeting Carson), we're herded single file through a metal detector. Flashlights probe the inner recesses of women's handbags.

As NBC pages seat us cattle, members of the *Tonight Show* band trickle from the wings. Gray of hair and ashen of skin, the band members look like the board of directors of an insolvent bank. Providing a palette of color is their conductor, Doc Severinsen, who prances like a show pony in harem jammies. He introduces Ed McMahon, who's been Johnny's loyal echo since the game show *Who Do You Trust?* During the warm-up, we're shown a highlight tape of Johnny's greatest hits, from the hippy-dippy sixties to the polyester seventies to the Armani eighties. The last clip includes Leno, underscoring the

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orderly transition through the nineties.

"Let's get this baby cranked up," says Ed, taking his position at the announcer's stand. Tension ticks in the air. "These last few minutes are exciting, aren't they?" he says. The stage director raises his hand for the countdown. Three, two, one—go. The band slams into the *Tonight Show* theme, Ed reels off the guest list, and with a vocal sweep cries:

"HERRRRE'S—Johnny!"

The curtain parts, and after a pause, out bounds Carson. His appearance sends a jolt. On TV he looks light as a kite. In person he projects power. With his albino hair, flagpole spine, and thumblike head, he carries the smack of Lee Marvin in *Point Blank*. (Between marriages Carson dated *Point Blank* co-star Angie Dickinson.) Glancing at a joke board slanted at knee level, he does a newswire rip of the day's events—the primary races, the Michelangelo computer virus, the repackaging of fat from Geraldo Rivera's fanny to his face. "He may have overdone it. Today he stuck his head out of the car window, and was arrested for mooning."

The TV screen flattens the field of Carson's stand-up routine. Shields him, to an extent. Seeing him live reveals how much more exposed he really is. Beneath the boom mike he works a naked circle of space. He has nothing to lean on or hide behind. Even with his crack timing and prepared "savers" (booed after a bad joke, he'll retort, "You didn't boo me when I smothered a grenade at Guadalcanal"), he's one step away from a clifflike drop into deaf air. No wonder his heart rate used to double before he did the monologue. He's auditioning for death every time he steps on the mound. Even when the monologue zips by like a slick bird, as it did when I saw him, failure isn't far from the forefront.

Carson is leaving the greatest gig and longest grind in American television with his mystique intact.

After his trademark golf swing takes us into commercial, Carson entertains questions from the audience. What are you going to do after retiring? someone asks. "I'm going to become a Jehovah's Witness. I like rejection." A joke to ward off a jinx.

He stations himself at the desk. Nearly all of the copy on Carson describes him as cool, aloof, armored (Tynan: "You get the impression that you are addressing an elaborately wired security system"), irritable, and, when crossed, shark-toothed. Longtime associates have sunk without a trace. He had Joan Rivers for fish bait when she defected as *Tonight*'s guest host to head her own show. Certainly he was no ride on the merry-go-round during his drinking days. Alcohol made him cocky, abusive, unstable. He allegedly abused his first wife, bullied his sons. Once, while sitting in a bar, he even dared tear a strip off Frank Sinatra:

> The door swung open, and Frank Sinatra walked in with more bodyguards and hangers-on than an Arab potentate. An aura of uncertainty, of danger, surrounded Sinatra. The room grew so quiet that you could hear the flattery drop. Johnny waited until the singer reached *his* table. He looked at Sinatra, then at his watch, and back at the singer. "Frank," Johnny said, "I told you twelve-thirty." [From *King of the Night*, by Laurence Leamer]

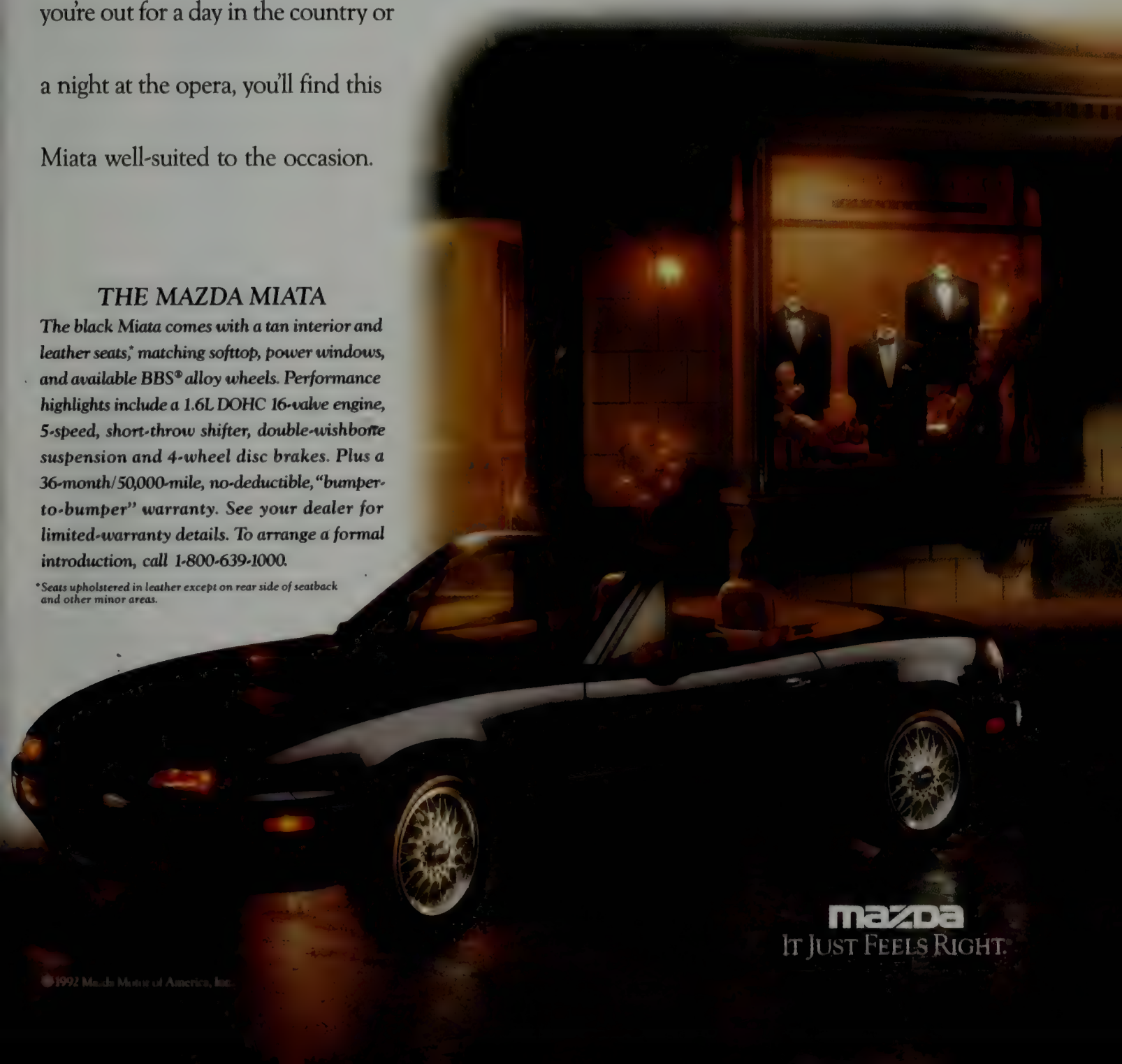
It was Ed who was deputized to clamp Carson in a bear hug and carry him to safety. Alcohol was the one release valve from the pressure cooker holding Carson prisoner during *Tonight*'s early heyday. Now he seems in no need of pissing his name in acid. On the set it's the supposedly bonhomous Ed who seems down, perched on the sofa like a parrot under a drop cloth. Congratulating Ed on his recent marriage, the comedian Don Rickles turns to Johnny and confides, "I give it about a week, tops." During the commercial breaks Carson doesn't lower the Cone of Silence, as I'd so often heard, but jollies up a storm with his guests, beating time on the desk with a pencil. The entire show, he vicariously jams with the band.

Carson's nonstop drumming is the key to his persona. He's always had a drum set in the house. He was once filmed behind the skins for *60 Minutes*. Profiles of Carson usually describe his drumming as a way of blowing off steam, flexing his chops. But it's more than a habit or hobby; it's image-defining. Significantly, the most undone Carson's staff remembers seeing him was when his friend the riotous jazz drummer Buddy Rich died. It was one of the rare times he canceled a show. Rich's death hit him hard because Rich was his unrepressed alter ego. For Carson is comedy's last practitioner of white jazz. Such jazz is often derided for not clawing to the raw bottom of experience, the syringe-littered hellhole of Charlie Parker, Lenny Bruce. Angst-ridden it's not. It belongs more to the bachelor pad of passé legend, where the cocktail hour unfolds against a "Playboy After Hours" skyline. But time has given Carson's pristine jazz touch steel tips. Early on he mastered the knack of lying back and adding casual fill to an interview rather than flailing away with all fours. His staying power is due in part to his steady pistons. When Jay Leno assumes the top spot on *The Tonight Show*, it will be more than one comedian succeeding another. It will represent the rock generation's completing its long coup d'état of pop culture, finally putting the jazz influence of the forties and fifties out to pasture. (If Bill Clinton becomes president, we'll have an Elvis in the White House, and an Elvis on *Tonight*.)

Factory-made though it is, *The Tonight Show* has its awkward patches. As Carson authenticates himself, he's less able to fake prefab hype. He floundered with twin-injected Melanie Griffith, asking her if she was a good homemaker. Although Elizabeth Taylor was a hoot, squeezed into leather like a Swiss-roll motorcycle moll, Carson blanked when she announced she was tossing herself a sixtieth-birthday bash at Disneyland to celebrate her inner child. (Although a reformed drinker, Carson never has peddled A.A.-speak.)

It's also become tedious hearing one celebrity after another eat up the clock offering him farewell testimonials, although I suppose such thanks are inevitable. Carson may become choked up the closer he gets to sayonara, but so far he's kept his emotions in check. He always has. One of his chief attributes is that he's never been a pimp for cheap schmaltz or personal pain. The clown-mask pathos of Jerry Lewis or Joan Rivers is beneath him. Unlike most comics, he's never seemed to bleed for audience love. He's more like Sinatra, tucking his ego into a holster. "You just get moody and walk away," gibed Don Rickles, who knows them both. Which enables him to leave the greatest gig and longest grind in American television with his mystique intact. Because of his self-containment, we'll probably miss Johnny Carson more than he'll miss us. Not to be maudlin, but I miss him already. □

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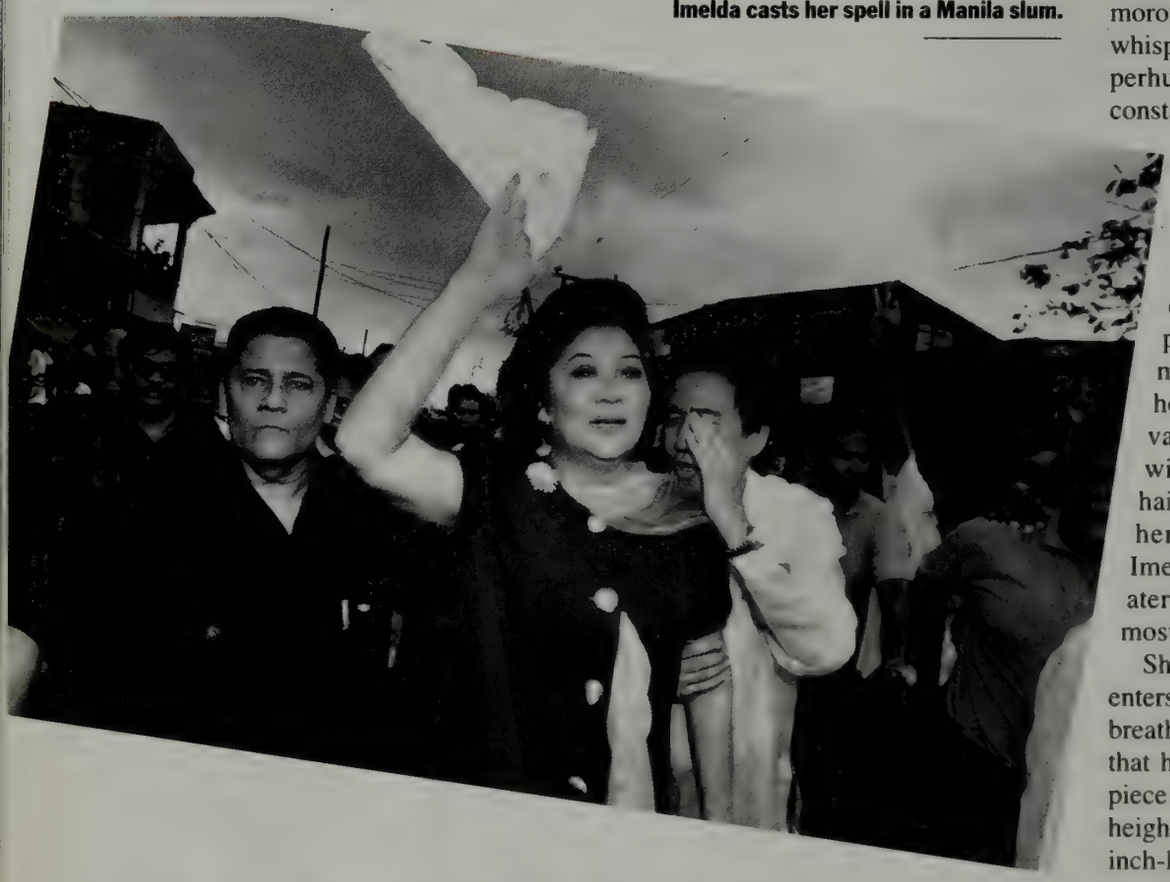
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"Ma'am, ma'am, we love you!" Imelda casts her spell in a Manila slum.

THE THRILLA IN MANILA

An exclusive election-eve report on the messianic mission, and last hurrah, of Imelda Marcos

BY LUISITA LOPEZ TORREGROSA

"My dreams," Imelda Marcos laments, "have become puny with the reality my life has become." Imelda is sitting across from me, soliloquizing in the quiet of the library in her Imperial Suite at the Philippine Plaza Hotel. She is looking drawn this morning, a wistful expression on her face, and strangely out of place in this impersonal hotel room, though she has lived here for five months, since her return from exile.

"I never dreamed I would live in palaces around the world," she goes on. "All I dreamed was to have a little hut with a picket fence by the sea. But it seems that destiny doesn't want to give me any peace. Life has come up too big for me. . . . Somehow destiny has brought me something bigger than myself. I just have to cope, day by day. This is just a day-to-day thing for me, these big things, but the real dream for me is my little house with the little picket fence by the sea. I wish I would have that, sincerely and truly."

Anyone who has spent any time with Imelda Romualdez Marcos has to wonder if she is entirely sane. And now that the sixty-two-year-old former First Lady is in the midst of her frenzied campaign for the presidency of the Philippines, her state of mind seems to swing even more wildly from serious to dreamy, her famous monologues waxing by turns humorous and maudlin. Even her friends whisper about her idiosyncrasies, her superhuman stamina, which keeps her constantly moving, talking, and changing clothes. They talk of her insomnia, her middle-of-the-night brainstorms, her migraines, her obsessions and delusions, her ferocious will to dominate, her craving for adulation, her endless playacting. There are no moments—but for those very few hours when she retreats to her private chambers and is finally alone with herself, when her lacquered hair is unpinned and falls down over her shoulders—when the life of Imelda Marcos is anything but theater: gaudy, absurd, and, at times, almost magnificent.

She is, above all things, a star. She enters the room and people seem to stop breathing. They stare, riveted. Look at that hair, frozen on her head. The hairpiece she wears to give it more body and height never shows. The manicured, inch-long red-enameled fingernails with the crescent tips, the discreet gold-and-pearl earrings, the Philippine-flag pin, the eleven-diamond engagement ring—they're all perfect. Her dresses are like paper-doll cutouts; she almost always wears the same simple short-sleeved shift style or a straight black skirt with a low-cut top and short-waisted jacket. Her size-8 shoes—the inevitable subject—are indeed spectacular, either two-tone or sparkling, sequined or just classic white or black, but always with five-inch-high spike heels.

"I sometimes think of her as a Barbie doll," one of her aides tells me. "They put on her hair, they dress her, they trot her out. She smiles, she waves. Like a windup doll. Sometimes I'm afraid she'll go bonkers."

The strain of her presidential campaign and endless court hearings has taken its toll, but only the paleness of her skin, beneath the glossy rose makeup and the rouge brushed on her cheeks, gives any hint that fatigue has set in. She is toned-up, girdled, perfumed, and her big-boned frame makes her look taller in person than she does in pictures and on-camera. Her slimming black silk dress conceals the extra pounds she has gained since the campaign began. Her legs, long and slim, are sheathed in opaque black stockings. She looks wealthy, elegant, every inch the queen. But with no covey of aides hovering around her, no cameras, no lights, and no props,

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she seems both vulnerable and alone.

"I was this way even young," she confides, "because I was born taller than usual and I was orphaned at an early age. Someone taller can always reach the better fruit on top. And if I was not sensitive to the feelings of others I would have incurred their ire. I had no mother to run to, so I had to be good for survival. I had to be giving to survive. I was orphaned at the age of seven. I was almost born alone. So I was almost born lonely.

"In the end you'll always be alone," she concludes. "Sometimes you don't even have yourself."

In the Philippines, where political vendettas and cockfighting are the favorite spectator sports, where votes are bought, traded, and fabricated, and where presidential elections leave a long bloody trail, the prospect of a battle between the two great symbols of modern Philippine politics, Imelda Marcos and Corazon Aquino, stirred deep passions and fears. Their friends pictured them as saints, Madonnas, saviors of their country. Their enemies described them as vindictive, calculating, and callous. But everyone agreed that nothing could have been more fitting for the country's chaotic and vengeful tradition than this script: the war of the widows.

But, despite many Filipinos' expectations, Cory Aquino stubbornly stuck to her decision not to stand for re-election on May 11. And so this turned out to be Imelda Marcos's season in hell alone. Not that she would admit it outright, for she is full of talk of God, beauty, and love. But here she is, sinking into the brutal world of electoral treachery, pursued by her ghosts and her demons, berated by the Manila establishment, snubbed by the very same society matrons who had once groveled for her favors, and spurned by big-name politicians her husband had once dominated.

From the day of her dazzling arrival in Manila, November 4, 1991, after nearly six years in exile, Imelda Marcos has been embattled in a crusade to vindicate her name, recover her wealth, and restore the Marcos dynasty. Two months after she landed, buoyed by the thousands who swarmed to kiss her feet and grab her arms (leaving her marked with what she calls "bruises of love"), she announced she would run for president, and her life, which has always been a melodrama, turned into Wagnerian opera. One moment she was Imelda the Diva, invincible, savoring the cultlike adoration of the masses. In a flash she was reduced to a pathetic figure in a courtroom, her head bowed and her lace handkerchief and rosary clutched in her hand, wincing at each accusation in the catalogue of charges against her—abuse of office, conspiracy to defraud, tax evasion. "I am ready to be persecuted," she would say afterward, Imelda the Martyr.

On the day she inaugurated her campaign headquarters, a converted restaurant she was having exorcised with a candlelight ceremony of incantations and dragon masks, a swarm of *los abandonados*, her people, converged outside, spilling from the parking lot into the street, tying up traffic at one of the city's busiest intersections. Mrs. Marcos, never one to waste a crowd, plunged in for a few minutes of perspiration-drenched flesh-pressing. I watched her, as I had for weeks, cast her spell.

The sight of a destitute people hailing the appearance of a woman accused of stealing them blind is bizarre.

She was up on the makeshift stage, under a string of red banners and flags, in a simple red knit dress and a chain of gold hearts, her arms flapping, her hands clenching, pointing, weaving in the air while her eyes roamed over the crowd, caressing it. Her voice boomed out, deeper than it ever is in private. The words were familiar. She rarely strayed from her theme—"to mother the sick, the poor, and the young, to mother the nation." The crowd didn't care if they had heard it all before. "Ma'am, ma'am, we love you!" the people screamed over and over. Babies were lifted by mothers and passed over the crowd to the stage for her blessing, a religious benediction, a kiss, a pat on the head. Old women cried and howled, as if they had just witnessed a miracle. She spoke without notes or cue cards or a moment's pause, and the crowd swooned. They teemed around her to kiss her feet, to touch her dress, leaving their sweat and smell all over her.

The sight of a destitute people hailing the appearance of a woman accused of stealing them blind is bizarre. But to the masses of *desesperados*, Imelda Marcos represents hope: a child of poverty who had ascended to the highest position in the land; a world celebrity; their own Cinderella. They remember the glittering nights at Malacañang, the presidential palace, when the mighty of the world, from Ronald Reagan to Lyndon B. Johnson to George Bush, came calling. Not for them, those gala evenings, but they felt pride that a onetime barrio girl, one of theirs, was now treated like an empress. They remember her tearful visits to the slums, the bounties that she brought them when a natural disaster struck. She is their Evita, a comparison Mrs. Marcos despises because she, unlike Eva Perón, did not come out of the brothels. But the similarities always come up—their influence on their husbands, their fierce ambition and greed, their compact with the poor, and, finally, their return from exile.

Though she has come home, Imelda doesn't have a home. Her $2,000-a-night Imperial Suite—a penthouse with his-and-her bedrooms, a marbled foyer with high-back wicker chairs, greenery, and orchids—is not a home but a crowded political hub. People stroll, perch on sofas and chairs, gossiping, and snacking on the canapés that waiters bring around on trays, beneath romanticized, iconlike portraits of Imelda and Ferdinand. Day after day, hundreds of supporters, supplicants, and political cronies make their pilgrimages down the hall of mirrors and through the carved wooden door to plead their cases, ask for favors, offer assistance. If they can help her campaign, she takes them aside and shuts herself in with them for hours. If they are just passing through, devotees looking for her blessing, she will agree to pose for a souvenir picture—tiny women and obsequious men fluttering around Imelda's tall, trussed figure—and shake a few hands. Then she will vanish once again into one of her many rooms, where unpacked boxes sit in hallways and the kitchen pantry has been turned into a communications center. A three-foot statue of the Virgin, which traveled with Mrs. Marcos all the way from New York, stands incongruously atop a five-foot-high stereo speaker.

On the morning of my interview, the Imperial Suite was mobbed. There were people everywhere, everyone waiting for Imelda. When she stepped into the living room, dozens rushed to


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her. But, told that I had been waiting, she dispersed the crowd, took me by the arm, and led me into her library. She asked everyone in the room to leave, closed the door, and offered me a seat in the armchair across from her.

There were no preambles. We began to talk about the fervor of the crowds at her campaign appearances, their longing for her. "When this happens to me," she testified, "I feel suddenly you and them become whole. A touch, a kiss, an embrace. And it is suddenly like two disabled meeting one another, come whole again. Like the love act.

"This is how I feel, because by me being gone, and my husband gone, I feel like half a scissor, and the same thing with them. They have missed you because you had been with them and sensitive to their needs, and in my case, after six continuous years of vilification, and you are embraced and kissed and warmly welcomed by the people, you become whole again, too. As First Lady your first work was to set up a standard, to be a symbol. . . . Now they want to find out if what you stood for was really real. The symbol that I projected was not a thing. It *was* real. I lived it. Because even when I was down there [in exile], I tried to meet pressure with as much grace, as much dignity in adversity, and with as much love. . ."

She spoke intensely, looking pained. Occasionally she tugged her dress under her and patted her hair. Her gaze strayed from time to time toward the draped windows and around the room, where a small religious figure and an inscribed picture of Ferdinand Marcos were the only personal touches. I saw no pictures of her children: her son, Ferdinand junior, known as "Bong Bong," and her daughters, Imee and Irene. Mrs. Marcos, who wants "to mother the nation," seldom appears publicly with her children, although Imee is involved in her campaign and Bong Bong, a baby-faced playboy, is running for Congress. Books lined the floor-to-ceiling shelves, but they seemed to be hotel books, not hers.

"Some people will just not understand you," she was saying. "I have always been criticized for excesses and extravagance. You are extravagant, you are excessive, when you commit to God, beauty, and love, which is unquantifiable in the material world. . . You know, my greatest joys and my greatest victories were not in the midst of wealth and power, but in the midst of deprivation, living in a foreign country."



Cory Aquino (center) divided her family by endorsing General Fidel V. Ramos (left), a former Marcos man.

Imelda blames everything on Cory Aquino—the endless disasters, the volcano eruption, the floods, the earthquakes, the squalor.

She was so good, so convincing. She could talk about the yin and the yang, dark and light, night and day, bad and good, and make it all sound almost sensible. But it was when she spoke of the Third World and her country's place in it that she moved into another dimension, a beguiling mix of philosophy, ideology, and sentimentality. "All the major countries can completely overwhelm the direction, the vision, of the Filipino people, and that's sad because it's a neocolonialism that takes control not only of things, places, but takes control of the mind and the spirit of people. . . might even turn them against themselves. This is what is so sad. And the third millennium being that of the media, the most potent instrument of the future, unless this is directed and founded on national priorities, then the countries of the world will be swept and cultural uniqueness will be swept, and the people will become enslaved, physically, materially, and spiritually." She quoted from Hernando De Soto's *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*—all in one sustained monologue, without a break.

She came down to earth swiftly when politics and money came up. Predictably, she said her campaign was doing well (despite polls showing that she ranks near the bottom of the field). "It's more than I ever expected. The time constraints are there, but more than that, the continuous harassment on my cases. But in general, it looks very well because eventually it's the people's will, and all I have to do is go around and when they know I am real, I am alive and real, and it's the way it was before. . ." She let that trail. She said she was confident of her organization, pointing out that it was built on personal relationships that go back twenty years. "Every given leader of our country, one way or the other, was with us. Every given town one way or another benefited from the rule of the Marcoses."

What about the money? Was she penniless, as she sometimes claimed? She thought awhile, weighing her answer, and finally said, "The Marcoses' wealth is solid but not liquid at this point." It was the straightest answer I had heard her give on this central issue of her life. The Philippine government has accused the Marcoses of stealing up to $5 billion. I was told there were gold deposits in Germany and Britain, but all of this talk was shrouded in mystery and riddled with gossip. No one seemed to know, or was willing to disclose, where she got the funds to pay for her hotel suite and her chartered $600,000 flight from New York to Manila. It was quite possible that the hotel bill was covered by unidentified benefactors. As for the New York–Honolulu–Manila flight, a portion was paid by those of us who traveled with her—$2,000 apiece—but the bulk of it was apparently financed by her backers. "We are blessed with friends," she said, "who believe in our cause."

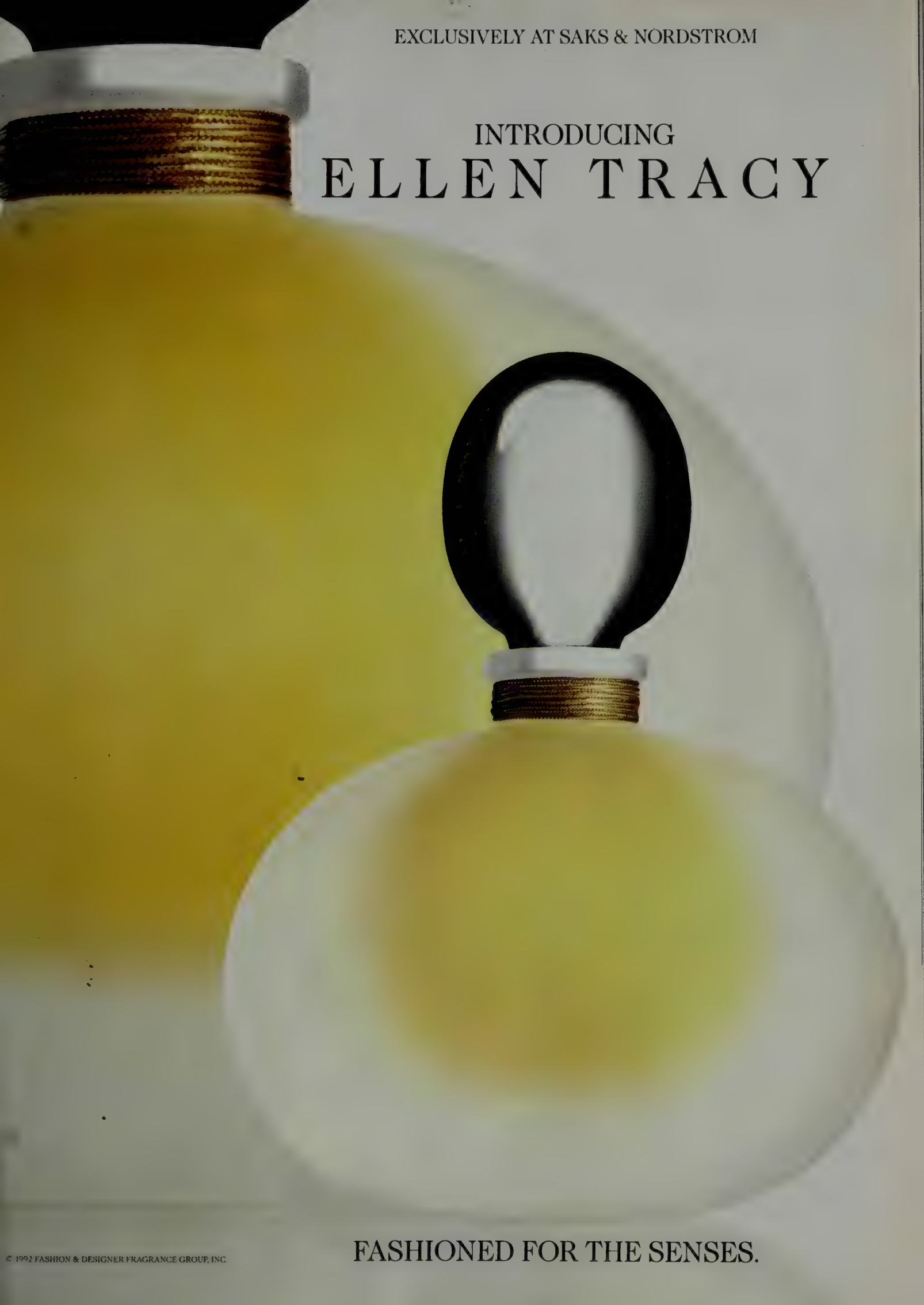
She claimed, of course, that the Marcos wealth was not stolen from the Philippines, that her husband found part of the fabled Yamashita gold treasure in the 1940s and stashed it away in his house in Ilocos Norte. The treasure, a hoard of gold bars and precious stones stolen by the Japanese army from occupied Southeast Asia during World War II and be-

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lieved to be buried somewhere in the Philippines, has obsessed treasure hunters for years. Even the Aquino government tried to find it. Now Imelda revealed that it was the young Ferdinand, then an anti-Japanese guerrilla fighter, who discovered it somewhere in northern Luzon. According to her story, he split the loot with several friends. "The gold bars were set into a wall, and one day when I had the wall torn down to make a room bigger, Marcos asked me, 'What did you do with the bricks?' I had had them thrown into a garden. Well, those were gold bars, covered with lead."

She was totally serious. She said Marcos concealed the gold bars, whose value skyrocketed in the years before he became president, because he didn't want people to envy his wealth. And so the young attorney Marcos, she said, was already a very rich man when she married him in 1954, but she said she didn't know that then. "He wanted to use the gold for the country. We used a lot of it." She admitted, glancing at me and seeing the look of disbelief on my face, that the story was, well, "unusual."

Later she said she wanted to show me something, and brought out a leather-bound album. It contained documents dating back to 1945 on the letterhead of a foreign firm. The documents, Imelda explained, recorded the number and appraised worth of Marcos's gold bars. There was obviously no way for me to ascertain the authenticity of the documents. But she flipped page after page, running her index finger down the tallies of sums of money, in dollars, that she said Marcos had deposited year after year.

I stood by, nodding my head, saying nothing.

"This is not just a campaign for a political election," Mrs. Marcos told me with sudden gravity. "It is a crusade. It is for me beyond the presidency... Mrs. Aquino has succeeded to really confuse the minds of the people, the values, the spirituality, the morals—everything. Anything is acceptable, violations of basic rights, rights of the living, rights of the dead. It's so overwhelming you don't know where to start." Imelda, who says she wishes Mrs. Aquino had run, "to clarify the issue more," blames virtually everything on what she calls the curse of Cory Aquino—the endless disasters of the past six years, the volcano eruption, the floods, the earthquakes, the squalor—and accuses her of nothing less than having "usurped the will of God."

Cory Aquino, who has heard it all, refuses to take on Imelda head-to-head, but when she condemns the Marcos-led forces, which she does with a passion that evokes her own inspired 1986 campaign against Ferdinand Marcos, it is nothing less than a declaration of war on the two most powerful heirs to the Marcos legacy, Imelda and Eduardo M. Cojuangco Jr. ("Danding" Cojuangco, Cory's cousin and one of Marcos's closest allies, has built a powerful political machine in the two and a half years since he returned from exile and is now considered among the leading presidential candidates.)

Imelda fell to her knees and, with her eyes closed and clutching her rosary, she crawled to the altar.

"I don't despise them," Mrs. Aquino told me in an exclusive interview at Malacañang, "but I am not fully convinced that they would like to continue this kind of democracy." She holds them "responsible for what happened to us under the previous dictatorship. That they deprived the Filipino people of their freedoms and made life really miserable for a great number of Filipinos." Cory Aquino's fatal flaw, her friends and critics agree, is her long memory. She holds grudges. She is vindictive. Imelda brings it up at every opportunity. "Maybe they use the term 'vindictive' in a very different way from what I believe it to be," Mrs. Aquino said. "I talk of justice. Reconciliation has to be based on justice. You just cannot easily forgive and forget."

In the austerity of her offices in a refurbished two-story building on the grounds of Malacañang, there was a loftiness to the fifty-nine-year-old Mrs. Aquino, a patrician manner that appeared untouched by the mundane concerns of other politicians. She cannot be taunted into a verbal brawl with her opponents—not even Imelda Marcos, who enjoys goading her. "I have never received any indications at all of a sign of good faith [from Mrs. Marcos]," she said mildly. "Does it mean she feels or believes she did not do anything wrong to our people?"

She was thoughtful, studied, throughout our interview, which took place in a large room furnished very formally, where she usually receives foreign dignitaries. I expected to see her in campaign yellow, but she came into the room, on time, as is her habit, wearing a red dress with puffy sleeves and plain black flats. Gone are the days when she described herself as "just a housewife," a reluctant leader, a shy widow. Now there is the aura of office all around her. She is talkative and gracious, but at no time is she anything less than presidential.

"I never dreamed that I would be that popular," she said, remembering her triumphs. "I was never really known in my country. I really devoted most of my time to raising my [five] children and then, of course, during the seven years and seven months of my husband's detention, very little really was said of us. I only got to be known after my husband's assassination." The memory obviously pains her still, but she didn't dwell on it. "I've always tried to adjust to whatever situation there is, and my life really in a sense has been like a roller coaster in that I've experienced the highs and the lows."

She seems unfazed by the rough treatment she gets daily in the newspapers: the litany of her failures, the personal attacks on her family. Her former supporters have abandoned her, her friends in the media criticize her, and few would now go to the barricades for her. "When people say that my popularity has greatly diminished, I think, insofar as media is concerned; but insofar as actual people are concerned, I really am still met with so much enthusiasm and appreciation." She seems to have found some place in herself separate from the presidential race.

I saw Imelda Marcos for the first time last October, in her town house in New York City, a few days before her return to the Philippines. She was coming down the staircase, wearing a long black blouse over black leggings, gold-colored high-heeled sandals, a gold watch, and gold earrings. She looked ten years younger and several inches taller than I had expected. At five foot seven she towers over most Filipino women (and quite a few men), but with her stiletto heels and high hairdo she is six feet tall.

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Her final days in New York were frenetic. The five-story Upper East Side town house that friends of hers rented for her from the Niger mission to the United Nations was overrun with press, aides, relatives, and friends. Television cameramen followed her everywhere; visitors lounged in the foyer, a drab room of faded elegance filled with Oriental artifacts, antiques, and an icon of the Santo Niño.

The house, which she erroneously claimed was the original Woolworth mansion, reflected her taste. A Bernard Buffet painting was positioned over a fireplace in the dining room. Flemish and French Impressionist paintings hung on papered walls in the upstairs drawing room. The rooms were crowded with coromandel screens, mirrors in gold-leaf frames, chinoiseries, vases of pink gladioli, sofas, and wing chairs. A corner of the drawing room was occupied by a grand piano. The library on the second floor contained 350,000 documents used in her racketeering trial in New York. It had a presidential-size desk flanked by American and Philippine flags. There were photographs and portraits of Marcos everywhere.

Upstairs on the third floor, where only her intimates and staff were allowed, her bedroom resembled her old chambers at Malacañang, down to the embroidered piña-cloth coverlet on the bed and cabinets filled with shoes. But that was not all. She had a gym, a sewing room, a disco decorated in black and red, and a rooftop garden of artificial grass overlooking Central Park.

New York had been her salvation after the death of her husband, in 1989. She never tired of saying that in New York she had been found innocent of all the racketeering charges against her by "twelve Americans who never perhaps had heard of Marcos, who saw 350,000 documents, ninety-five witnesses, in a four-month trial in the most exacting judicial system in the world." She had lived the high-society matron's life, attending gala nights at the Met, occasionally going on shopping sprees. (Though her aides, playing down her spendthrift image, claimed she shopped at Casual Corner and the Limited, she also dipped into the stocks at Chanel and Valentino.) She dined at Manhattan's most expensive restaurants—Le Cirque, the Sign of the Dove, the Stanhope—and "dated a lot," friends said, meaning she rarely went out unescorted.

"She's not a woman who plays around," her friend and occasional escort the movie producer Franco Rossellini told me. "She does not date. She's too busy for that. But there are always people around her. I've never seen her alone."

She entertained in grand style, sending a Cadillac to pick up guests, serving excellent Spanish dishes and wine. But she maintained only a few links to her jet-set days, when, according to a friend, she was "the queen of queens."

Imelda was a magnet for gay men, artists, and entertainers who were drawn to her glamour and generosity. "One day she asked me about a ballet dancer she liked," a friend of hers told me. "She wanted to know if he was 'like that.' I said, 'Mrs. Marcos, what do you mean, like what?' She blushed and giggled and said, 'Oh, you know.' So I said, 'You mean, is he a homosexual? Yes, ma'am, he is. And so am I and many of your dearest friends.' She was shocked."

The Italian socialite Cristina Ford remained a friend even in the days of exile. And Doris Duke, the heiress, came to Imelda's rescue, posting more than $5 million to cover her bail and other legal expenses in New York. But others in that chichi circle, people she had showered with attention, such as the pianist Van Cliburn and the actor George Hamilton, no longer came around.

"Before," Imelda said, "I was just a dream, an illusion, a fantasy. But now I feel good because I am real."

"I got the impression," said historian and friend Carmen Guerrero Nakpil, who visited her in New York, "that she was having a nice, comfortable life, making the best of it, putting the best foot forward. Being brave about it." True, she was no longer First Lady and could not snap her fingers and have a thousand bouquets of flowers magically appear, and she no longer spent her nights in splendor at the Waldorf Towers. But she had her attendants, a footman, a doorman, the couturier, the chauffeur, and the Cadillac limousine with the license plates bearing her initials and lucky number, IRM-777. Why give up all of that for an uncertain future in the Philippines? Mrs. Nakpil had asked her. "What's going to happen to me here?" Mrs. Marcos answered. "I don't want to be another Jackie Kennedy."

During her last months in Manhattan there were few splashy outings. She liked to walk down the block to a fish-and-chips place or stop at a Roy Rogers for fried chicken. She never smoked and rarely drank anything but Diet Coke, which she occasionally mixed with beer. She always had to watch her weight and her blood pressure, but she couldn't resist fried foods, roasted pigskin, and chicharrón. Her mornings usually began with a typical Filipino breakfast of broiled fish and rice, and she rarely ate again until nighttime.

On her last day in New York, Halloween eve, she threw a small party in her drawing room. The house, which had been a thoroughfare for days, was tightly guarded, and permission was required to move about. Her security men, a team of former U.S. Secret Service agents who would later cause a furor in Manila with their Marine-like tactics, guarded the doorway, all the rooms and floors and side entrances. The party, which was much smaller and less festive than expected, had a strained gaiety to it, and Mrs. Marcos, having sung for her guests, appeared tense and irritable. Around midnight, early for her, she vanished into her private quarters.

The next morning she delayed her departure four hours while those of us traveling with her waited on the sidewalk. Her staff's belongings, packed in cardboard boxes and some Louis Vuitton suitcases, were hauled into vans along with pictures of Marcos, without which, aides said, she would not set foot out the door. (Her own bags, an aide told me, had been spirited away during the night to keep reporters from finding out how much stuff she was taking.) At one point she came outside, dressed in a calf-length black mink coat whose price we could only guess at, but she quickly went back in. When she finally reappeared, two hours later, she had changed from mink to modest wool.

She was hustled through the crowd of photographers into her limousine. The three-foot plaster statue of the Virgin, which had been standing in the second-floor bar, was shoved into the backseat, where Imelda was crunched between two American financiers, her attorney

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James P. Linn, and security men. The convoy wended its way down Fifth Avenue for Imelda's final stop before leaving town.

Imelda's presence could turn even a great cathedral into a big-top circus. On the steps of St. Patrick's a small group of tourists and passersby had gathered, having guessed that the TV cameras indicated the arrival of a V.I.P. When she stepped out of her car, a well-dressed man standing next to me turned to a companion and said, "Oh! It's Imelda Marcos. What's she going to do? Have a shoe sale?"

Mass was being said at the main altar as Mrs. Marcos, a vision in black, marched down a side aisle, photographers and reporters in hot pursuit. An aide carrying the statue of the Virgin trotted behind her while her security men tried to scare off the press. Flashbulbs kept going off anyway. At the little Chapel of Our Lady, a sanctuary in the back of the cathedral, Imelda fell to her knees and, with her eyes closed and clutching her rosary, crawled to the altar. She kissed the ground and lay prostrate there. Parishioners, startled, watched quietly.

A few minutes later, she emerged from the cathedral, and our caravan sped off to J.F.K. for the flight to Honolulu. Despite all the goodwill that Imelda Marcos had felt for New York, there were no crowds wishing her well, no prominent people and well-known friends seeing her off. It was hardly the great farewell she might have written for herself.



Dancing with the dictator: Imelda and Ferdinand.

Flying with Imelda, on a chartered Evergreen International Airlines Boeing 747 apparently made available to her by "friends," was an entourage of allies, relatives, wealthy financiers, her staff of forty, her Washington-based public-relations advisers, her American lawyer, her twenty-man American security detail, her masseuse, her manicurist, her hairdresser, the statue of the Virgin, which was wrapped in a blanket and buckled into a first-class seat, and about seventy-five journalists in economy class. Imelda was settled in the upper deck, with her lawyer and intimates, but there was no keeping her strapped in her seat.

With the media demanding one interview after another, she spent much of the flight on-camera, hypnotizing the photographers with several changes of costume, switching first from a classic black silk dress to sexy skintight black leggings, a sheer polka-dot blouse, and gold high-heeled sandals. She talked for hours, rewinding her pet phrases: "I am on a mission of love and peace. It is my most sacred and filial duty to bury the mortal remains of my husband in his motherland. . . . More than life I value vindication. . . . For me it's enough to mother the poor, the sick, and the young." Crowded around her in the first-class cabin, we could hardly hear her over the whir of the jet engines, but she was still spellbinding. Not so much because of what she said but because of the way she delivered it, with that sad, hurt look, that tone of heartbreak.

"Imelda is not the elite," says a detractor. "That's why she's so goddamn vulgar."

But not even Imelda Marcos can entertain a crowd for ten hours, and while she prayed and slept, members of her staff worked on an arrival statement and took turns napping. Honolulu seemed impossibly far, and when we finally arrived, close to midnight, there were only a few clusters of Marcos loyalists to greet her, chanting "Imelda! Imelda!" She was now dressed in lavender, freshly made-up and coiffed, not a trace of the long flight showing on her face. Holding a bouquet of roses, she seemed dazzled by the crush of reporters and cameras around her. The herd went wild, shoving and pushing to get close to her. Her security men pushed and shoved back, and she was hustled into a bus and hauled away to her villa in Makiki Heights.

The next afternoon, Imelda was talking again. "My heart always seems to know what to do. All my life I go by what my heart tells me. That is why I think sometimes I look like I am irrational, unrealistic, not practical, not logical. Like I was an unguided missile."

Mrs. Marcos was holding court on her lanai high above the Pacific Ocean. She had just visited the hillside chapel in the Valley of the Temples Memorial Park, where her husband was laid fully dressed in a refrigerated casket draped with the Philippine flag. Tapes of Verdi and Wagner were played at her request while she knelt beside the casket, lifted the cover, and ran her fingers through Marcos's hair. "He looks even better now," she said, a remark that would be quoted for days in the press. She had arrived at the grave site in a white Cadillac limousine, wearing a white silk dress, white patent heels, and black designer sunglasses. Her supporters clapped and shouted. The press swarmed around her. "She has great legs!" someone said. The circus never stopped, even at the cemetery.

Now, having fulfilled her widow's duty, she was lunching with half a dozen men from the past, friends, cronies, and politicians, all nodding approvingly at everything she said and laughing loudly at her jokes. She could outwit and outtalk all of them, and she did. She rambled for hours, pausing at one point to show off her Charles Jourdan shoes. "Maybe next time I'll get a discount," she said, laughing. Turning from one subject to another, switching from mood to mood, she unveiled herself, peeling layers off for her guests. "I am here," she said. "I welcome everyone to see for yourselves. What is the truth about Imelda?"

On her left hand she wore her diamond engagement ring, which a few years ago was reportedly appraised at $300,000. She showed it off to prove, she said, that Marcos was a rich man well before he became president, in 1965. "Marcos was a giver, not a taker," she said then and time after time. "I may be broke, but I'm not poor," she would say often, citing the friends who helped her, the goodwill around

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her. These were stock responses to the charges, to the insistent press inquiries and the humiliating listing of Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos as the world's all-time biggest thieves in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

But she didn't dwell on such unpleasantness. She wanted to talk about Imelda. "My role, not the president's role, was to bring out what is good, what is beautiful, in the Filipino, and that can be perceived in the material world as excessive, frivolity, cheap, or extravagant..." She spoke like this for hours, clutching her hands, pleading for understanding. "Before," she told us, "I was just a dream, an illusion, a fantasy. But now I feel good because I am real. I have been to the real world. And now I have been with real friends, and now I am real, too."

For months after her arrival in Manila, Imelda knocked on doors, made telephone calls, recalling obligations and juicier times. If anyone understood the system of *utang na loob*, the Philippine tradition of debts of gratitude, it was Imelda. She even paid respects to some of her bitterest adversaries—such as Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, who had led the revolt that toppled Ferdinand Marcos—appearing at their doorways, bringing offers of reconciliation. She showed up, sometimes uninvited, at society parties, startling the hosts and their guests. During the Christmas holidays, when the homecoming spirit had yet to sour on her, she dazzled partygoers at a holiday ball, arriving decked out in a glitzy black miniskirt and dancing the lambada.

Flying with Imelda was the statue of the Virgin, wrapped in a blanket and buckled into a first-class seat.

But once she decided to run for president, it was not enough to show off a limber figure or display her wares and her brazen courage. She needed a vice president, someone with a name and popular appeal. She invited several prominent men to join her: she went to their homes, she wooed their wives, she wined and dined them, she humbled herself. She spent weeks of sleepless nights going from one politician to another, "looking for vices," as one of her aides said flippantly, stealing away from the throng in her suite for late-night meetings with prospective running mates. Her publicists, blindly optimistic, would whisper that this or that well-known governor or senator or businessman was just ripe to fall into her hands. Any moment now an announcement would be made. Time after time she was turned down.

Her vice-presidential candidate turned out to be a provincial politician, a faceless figure with none of the national following of the man she had hoped to have at her side. When they made their first appearance together, at a church, she barely spoke to him. They knelt together for a brief prayer, along with aides and relatives, and she clasped her hands and held her rosary, but her face seemed made of stone.

"It's a fiasco," one of her aides told me. "She should've just run for mayor of Manila."

It was no secret that Mrs. Marcos, who wanted to keep everyone around her happy, did not run a tight ship, that she did not draw the lines of responsibility, and that she alone was really in charge. She was a one-woman campaign: her own publicist, her own staff manager, her own spokesman. "She doesn't have the Old Man's people to help her," one insider told me, "and the Imelda loyalists don't know a thing about a presidential campaign." Her strategy, outlined to me one night over drinks at the Manila Hotel by a rough-faced, icy-eyed veteran of Marcos campaigns, came down to the masses, the C-and-D crowd in marketing terms. He seemed worried she had not made inroads into the mainstream—the business and middle-class communities. That was the only time I heard anyone in her camp discuss the nuts and bolts of her campaign.

Back at the Imperial Suite, where waiters periodically came around with trays of soup for visitors, sweet middle-aged women sat beneath the portraits of Marcos and Imelda, clutching their Louis Vuitton bags, and aides scurried about, flitting in and out of rooms. "Come sit with us," the ladies would call over, offering to squeeze me between them and tell me their stories. Imelda is beautiful and good, they said. All those things she had—the jewelry,

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the clothes, the cars—all were gifts. An elderly woman, a lawyer with permed hair dyed orange, painted eyebrows, and smears of lavender eye shadow, recalled her own days as a "blue lady," one of Imelda's flock of society matrons. They all have their stories, their souvenirs from that time, and their hopes that with Imelda back they can recapture their lost place in society.

Those were her friends, in the cocoon at the Philippine Plaza; those were her friends in the barrios. But elsewhere the world was not so kind. The mainstream English-language newspapers in Manila either ignored her altogether or made fun of her, mocking her statements as the ravings of a madwoman, a liar, and a thief. Few tried to be evenhanded. Her humiliating appearances in court, where she faces more than eighty criminal and civil cases, were gleefully reported, but scant mention was made of the fact that experts believe the government stands little chance of winning most of those cases, because of poor preparation. Although she sneered at insinuations that she wanted the presidency only to avoid prosecution, her critics insisted that was the real reason behind her candidacy, and no opportunity was missed to remind the public that she had been, after all, arraigned on criminal charges.

When she was hauled away from the Plaza lobby, moments before her planned departure on a pilgrimage to a provincial shrine, and taken in a police car to a precinct across town for failing to post bail on a charge of violating foreign-currency laws, she was banner headlines. Her picture, splattered on the front pages the next morning, displayed her most unflattering side, the double chin, the big cheeks, as she shouted from the police-car window.

Around town, in the hotel coffee shops where politicians and hangers-on spend half their lives, exchanging and embellishing rumors, the word was put out that Imelda Marcos, reputedly one of the richest women in the world, really had no money, that the money, too, was illusion, or hidden, sequestered, frozen, out of her reach. That the governors, mayors, and warlords—the network of grass-roots handlers on whom Philippine presidential candidates depend for victory—had come away after visits to her penthouse with only vague promises of future glories but not the envelopes stuffed with hard cash required to buy the votes and the politicians needed to crank up a nationwide political machine.

"It's a disaster," an old friend of Imelda's who came from abroad to give her his support told me. "I saw her yesterday. She was very nice, beautiful as usual, and then I sat for two hours in that living room full of people, and these women were running around, and I never saw the First Lady again. I watched her candidates on television. They are the worst of the lot, even how they dress."

Over the next few days we talked. Seeming both irritated at Imelda and disappointed that her chances of winning appeared small, he went on to eulogize Ferdinand Marcos, and at the end of a long story, as all stories about Marcos tend to run, he said bitterly, "She fucked him up.... She made a major mistake. She thought she was running the country, but she wasn't running the toilet.... She's like a sponge. She has difficulty understanding what's hers and what belongs to the Filipinos. She likes it, she takes it."

He was her critic and her friend too; her companion in old times, a guest at Malacañang, a favorite. He adored her, he said. "She's beautiful. She's kind. She's brave. The only obsession she has is to be rich so she can be generous." But he also said she never pays her bills and can be ungrateful to her benefactors, and he did not fully support her run for the presidency. "I don't buy that it's her turn."

But it wasn't her politics or her frivolity that enraged her critics. "Imelda is not the elite," said a detractor. "That's why she's so goddamn vulgar." The elite had no use for her. In the palatial homes of Manila's ruling class, she was a pariah. At one party, several society women walked out when she arrived. Others simply stay away from her, greeting her politely but coolly when they see her. A friend of hers from the old days, a well-known writer, put it to me in a few words. "She's fighting for her life, but she has nothing, only the adulation of the poor."

This is a country where family dynasties rule the lives of millions, as they have for the nearly one hundred years since Spanish rule ended, and where presidential elections are spectacles of violence and intimidation, promises and deception. The elections of 1992—with eight presidential candidates and some 17,000 positions open, from senator down to town councilman—are already tainted. Old voter-registration lists were so rigged for so many years that the Commission on Elections cannot hope to wipe them all clean, and the

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electoral process is saddled with loopholes, obscure rules, and a backward vote-counting system. Besides, vote tampering is so common, especially in the provinces, where money and muscle almost always have the edge, that no one can guarantee fair and peaceful elections on May 11.

The trend of this campaign was fixed early on, with voter-registration fraud in major districts and a political massacre in a province near Manila, where the mayor, the police chief, and two bodyguards were machine-gunned to death one morning by goons identified as policemen working for a rival politician. But bloodshed and fraud are not the only worries. With eight presidential candidates fighting for more than 30 million votes, it is feared that there will be no clear winner and that a free-for-all will follow the elections, with charges of cheating and a barrage of street demonstrations—or perhaps even an attempted coup before or after the elections.

"I did everything right. [But] in the end nobody talks about me building the cultural center, the heart center. They think of the shoes."

One candidate, Miriam Defensor Santiago, a forty-six-year-old lawyer and self-described genius whose slash-and-burn campaigning style has earned her a huge following among young voters, has already declared that she will defy the election results if she does not win. The polls have consistently shown her leading the pack, a fact she claims is absolute proof that only cheating by her rivals could explain her defeat. (Never mind that the polls are dismissed by many political analysts as entirely unscientific and unreliable.)

All this comes at a time when Cory Aquino's popularity has plummeted and her administration has lost much of its moral standing. The economy is a disaster. People have grown cynical and feel helpless. "What we need is a dictator," a military takeover, an old pro-Cory society matron told me, a sentiment I heard from a shocking number of people, rich and poor.

"The military will step in only when nobody wants to call the shots," the Armed Forces chief of staff, General Lisandro Abadia, told me during a private dinner. "I have a feeling it's in the back of some minds. People, civilians, have come to me," he said, insisting, however, that he did not hanker for power and that he would not lead a coup. But, he told me, "I won't allow this country to go to the dogs. I won't allow it. Sometimes, you know, we become prisoners of the moment. Sometimes you are not in control of destiny, of history in the making."

From day to day in the campaign there were new alignments, new backroom deals, new gossip. All played the game, but few played it better than Imelda Marcos. Nothing was more fitting in the theater of Philippine politics than her campaign to wrest power once and for all from the hands of her arch-rival, Cory Aquino. Nothing else—no other issue, no other rivalry—defined the elections quite as starkly as the war of the widows. While Cory Aquino, whose term of office ends on June 30, was not running again, the campaign was still at heart an epic drama in the long struggle between the two major names in Philippine politics, Marcos and Aquino.

The president's surrogate, her hand-picked successor, is General Fidel V. Ramos, who she believes saved her from the six coup attempts during her presidency but who was also Marcos's lieutenant during martial law. Ramos, a cigar-chewing sixty-three-year-old West Pointer who resigned from his job as Cory's defense secretary to run for president, redeemed himself when he joined the revolt against Marcos in February 1986, and he has since been loyal to Mrs. Aquino. Still, her allegiance to him seems curiously impersonal. They agree on all the issues, she told me, and she praised his commitment to her program of "new politics" and grass-roots "people empowerment." But she gives no other reason for her support of him.

Ramos is hardly a beloved figure around Manila. "He's authoritarian. He doesn't listen," says a top-ranking general. "Ramos surrounds himself with a coterie like him, and he doesn't get the best people."



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Cory Aquino's friends, relatives, and in-laws are divided over her endorsement of Ramos. "I know her, but I don't understand her," says Cory's brother-in-law Senator Agapito "Butz" Aquino, who like the rest of the Aquino clan joined the campaign of the Speaker of the House, Ramon V. Mitra Jr., a self-made millionaire with an L.B.J.-style knack for wheeling and dealing. Although Mitra spent time in prison during martial law, he once did business with Danding Cojuangco, a fact that clouds his anti-Marcos record and that many believe cost him Cory's support.

Like a substantial number of her opponents and friends, Mitra believes that Cory Aquino had wanted to run again, that she had been hoping for the "clamor, the buildup for her to run." That did not happen, but with him and Danding running strong and Ramos at times floundering, Mitra says he is still not ready to count her entirely out.

For all of Cory Aquino's suspicions that Danding and Imelda are secretly allied, or that they are identical offspring of the Marcos dictatorship, their relationship is hardly one of friends or political cronies. They have never been intimates, although Imelda's son, Bong Bong, is Danding's godson. Danding and Imelda have long been rivals—for her husband's confidence, for her children's affections, for the spoils of the Marcos years. For Mrs. Marcos there is only one true heir to her husband's legacy, and that is herself. For Danding, Imelda is nothing but trouble.

"She's a plus in some areas of the country," Danding told me one afternoon in his house, "but she would be a minus, too, in other areas. I was hoping that we could consolidate our forces and am still hoping for that before Election Day. We need all the votes we can muster so that hopefully we can have a pretty comfortable lead so that it would be pretty hard to challenge the results." But so far Imelda has refused to play second fiddle to Danding, and he to her, so there they stand.

There is a gravity about Danding Cojuangco, a bare-bones strength that scares his enemies and awes his friends. His reputation—crony, monopolist, warlord, "the boss"—darkens everything about him. But the afternoon I saw him, when he played with his grandchildren and bantered with his elegant wife, Gretchen, he seemed relaxed. He is a big man, fifty-six years old, not tall but muscular, with a bulldog's neck, broad shoulders, and a paunch. His wealth—estimated at close to a billion dollars—was amassed during his years with Marcos, but he credits his business acumen for his success, claiming that he was already a millionaire when he teamed up with the late dictator, and that his wife, the heiress to a land fortune, was even richer than he when he married her.

Unlike Mrs. Marcos, who has been unable to shake off her reputation, Danding has repackaged his image with surprising success into that of a strongman with a heart, a decisive but benevolent autocrat who could turn the country around. "I will be the chief executive of all the sectors of the economy. I want to establish as my legacy a ruling political party." When I asked him how he would deal with entrenched interests, he didn't hesitate. "I'll do whatever it takes."

He didn't hesitate, either, when he spoke about Marcos. "I will always honor his memory," he said without apology. "But I am not him." While Danding may struggle to free himself from the thrall of Marcos, he cannot fully escape from it. For it is the ghost of Ferdinand Marcos that stalks this campaign. Cory Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Ramon Mitra—friend or enemy—all are haunted by it, and most of all Imelda herself, who carries it within her.

She dazzled partygoers at a holiday ball, arriving decked out in a glitzy black miniskirt and dancing the lambada.

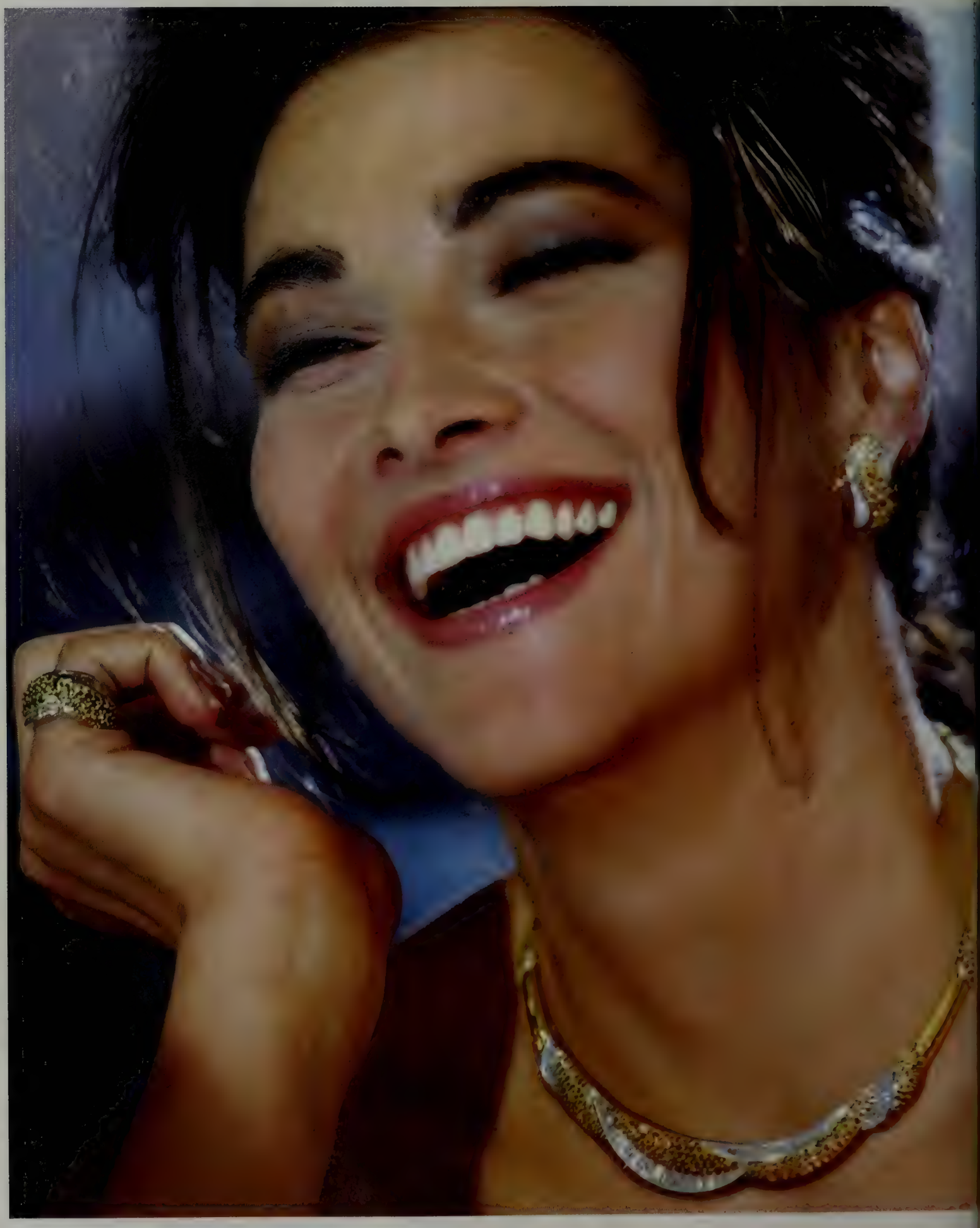
"Let me tell you a story about a girl who did everything wrong," Imelda said, leaning forward, her body turned toward me. I knew this meant everything to her. "She came to me during my trial in New York and she said, 'Ma'am, I did everything wrong in my life. I went around with men. I married the wrong man. This and that. Now I have so many problems.' So I told her, 'You think you have problems. I did everything right. I didn't dance or date until I was twenty-one, I married the right man, and look at me now. Who's the one with the problem?' I did everything right. And I tried to do it morally, beautifully, well, all the time. In the end, nobody talks about me now building the cultural center, the heart center, the kidney center, these monuments that we are so proud of. They think of the shoes."

Our time was running out. Our interview in the library had lasted almost two hours. Her lawyers were waiting outside, and I could see the strain showing on her, the eyes clouding. That morning her blood pressure had shot up so high that a doctor was called, and when I ran into him at the elevator he told me he had given her "a simple treatment." Sometimes, he said, she takes a sedative, to sleep. A few days later, when she became ill again, her staff was alarmed, but Mrs. Marcos roused herself eventually and took off for a rally. It was like this always, great dramas, sudden highs, tragic lows.

Now that the campaign was in trouble, Imelda needed something that would electrify the nation. I was not surprised, then, when she yielded to the terms Cory Aquino had imposed on the return of Marcos's body: that he would have to be buried in his home province, Ilocos Norte, far from the volatile politics of Manila. Mrs. Marcos had at first held out, wishing instead to bury him in the capital, with the honors due a head of state, where millions could be expected to turn out to mourn him. But now she relented and agreed to bring him back from the Valley of the Temples Memorial Park near Honolulu to his birthplace. She knew that the return of the body, followed by the nine days of mourning traditional in the Philippines and the burial in a grave site she had chosen, on a hilltop, would serve to fire up the passions of her country. Even if she didn't win the elections, it would bring her a moment of personal triumph.

"I am always reaching out," she said at the close of our visit. She had tears in her eyes and her voice had dropped to a whisper. I was braced for this, for the final curtain, but there was still something about her that was moving. Her utter loneliness. "A reaching out and at the same time a constant wall was always presented to me...and as the years went you were more privileged than the others, you married a very outstanding man, wealthy, brilliant, president for so long, and, you know, the higher you go the more you reach out. Well, it has been a life of extremes, my life." □


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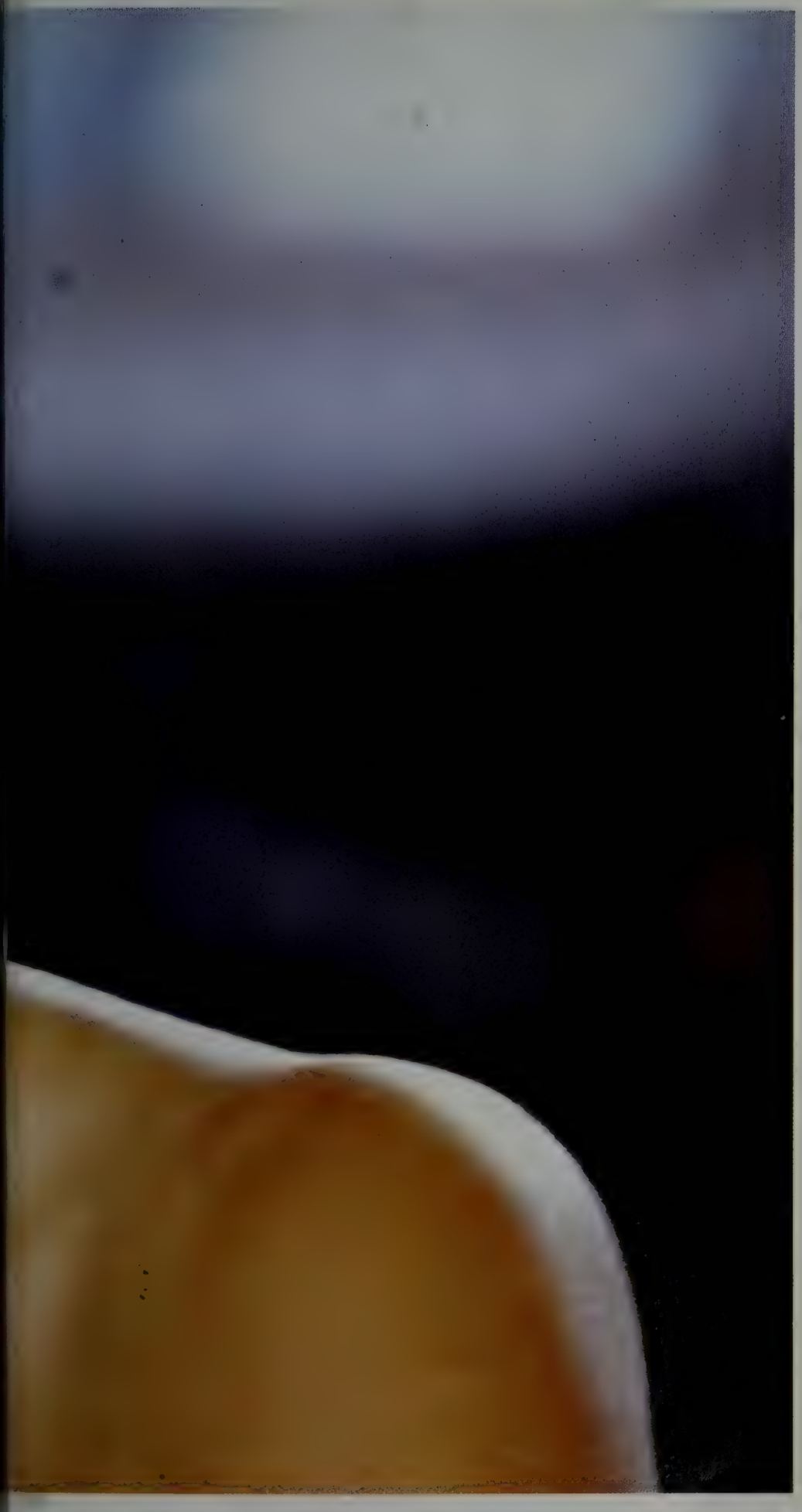


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MAGRITTE EXPECTATIONS

Mark Tansey's whimsical, thought-provoking canvases are turning painting on its head

BY MARK STEVENS



The painter Mark Tansey recently designed a wooden device, which he keeps in his New York studio, that among other things brilliantly satirizes recent intellectual life. It is a sort of mind wheel—literally wheels within wheels—on which he has scratched hundreds of phrases. Many are borrowed from what he calls "third-rate criticism." The inner wheel contains subjects; the middle, verbs; the outer, objects. By spinning the wheels roulette-style, he can create thousands of different "sentences." As in:

Purists/Menaced By/The Pleasure Problem.

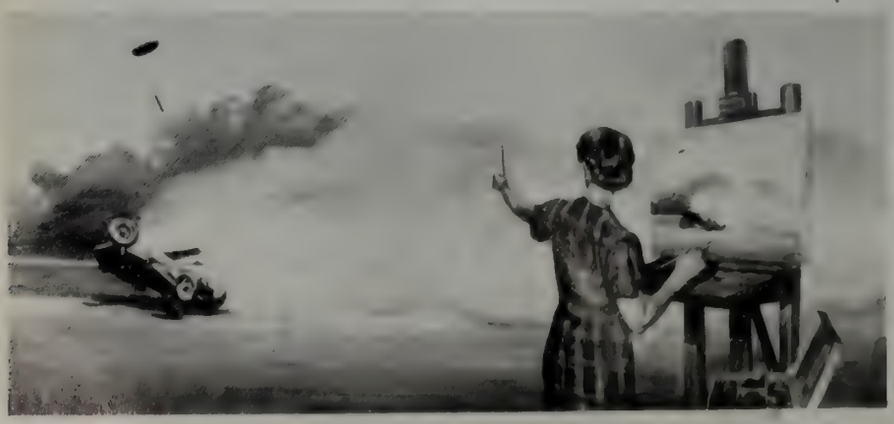
Aging Courtiers/Investing In/Cognitive Certainty.

Derridean Trackers/Annihilating/Tabula Rasa.

The phrases are delightful nonsense, but can also be provocative. The wheel has a way of freeing the mind from the deadly earnestness of the academy, of airing out clichés and making refreshing connections. The same is true of Tansey himself. A soft-spoken artist who is forty-two years old, Tansey can discuss a fashionable thinker like Jacques Derrida with both respect and irreverence. The mental life of the contemporary art world interests him so much, in fact, that the glitz seems to pass him by and he ventures little about his own life, though he answers any question candidly. When asked what effect his two small children have had on him, for example, he simply smiles and says, "They filled an area occupied until then by nameless anxiety."

Tansey first attracted attention in 1981, by lampooning the naïve desire of many critics to respond "innocently"—without the distraction of obvious content or imagery—to the abstract forms of art. His painting called *The Innocent Eye Test* showed some scientific men conducting an experiment to see whether or not a real cow could recognize a painted bull. Over the years he has attracted increasing attention because he could convey, in surprising and often droll images, what it was like to be a thinking artist. It is an important subject, for contemporary artists often think much and badly.

Now he is the subject of an exhibition at the Curt Marcus Gallery in New York and a book from Abrams by Arthur Danto, a philosopher-critic. The painter and the critic make a good match, for Tansey has steeped himself in much of the philosophical criticism that dominates recent art. (One painting is called *Derrida Queries De Man.*) Like many artists of his generation, he is fascinated by the great panorama of contemporary imagemaking and by the different meanings conveyed by old masters, pop imagery, photographs. He relishes the freedom and flux, but also recognizes the problems they present. "The biggest problem today is what to do a picture of," Tansey says. "There is no God or king or church or nobility to be glorified or to tell us what to paint. There are images of every kind everywhere. So what is one to represent? How do you choose?"



Tansey in his studio with his picture library, *top. Left, Action Painting,* 1981, oil on canvas, 36 in. by 78 in.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD EBERLE



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His answer is to play with the predicament. In the late 1970s, Tansey supported himself as an illustrator. While making drawings for *The New York Times Book Review*, he became interested in how to express cultural ideas visually. He thought the content of painting was becoming much too restricted. Why couldn't painting express a wider range of meaning? Become more open-ended? He began clipping figures from old magazines and compiling an enormous catalogue of poses, which he arranged, juxtaposed, pored over.

A lover of paradox and ambiguity, Tansey devised sly ways to present the crisscross of meaning, style, and image. He worked with both photography and painting. He dressed up (in revealing ways) cherished ideas and clichés of modernism. In *Triumph of the New York School*, for example, he mocked the macho rah-rah that underlay the celebration of Abstract Expressionism after World War II. The picture, in the stagy style of old battlefield scenes, shows American painters and critics, dressed as soldiers, accepting the surrender of the School of Paris. Picasso wears a fur coat.

It is certainly true that (as in Magritte) the mysterious content is what is most powerful in Tansey's art.



Tansey's mind wheel makes odd, refreshing connections. *Top, Triumph of the New York School*, 1984, oil on canvas, 74 in. by 120 in. (At table, André Breton, signing, and Clement Greenberg.)

His most important painting to date, *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, blends and juxtaposes the sacred mountain of modernism—which Cézanne painted obsessively—with Plato's legendary cave. If you look at the painting one way, the mountain casts a shadow across a pool of water in which figures are bathing. If you turn the painting upside down, however, the mountain's shadow becomes a cave, and the bathers' reflections reverse themselves—what was flicker is now figure.

Tansey developed his taste for scholarship early. His father, the art historian R. G. Tansey, worked on a famous survey of the history of art. His mother taught art history and helped computerize collections of slides. The tidy ordering of masterpieces, the story of style warring with style, is his birthright. It is not just the images of art history, however, that mark Tansey. A California kid, he kept one eye on pop imagery. "The 1940s and '50s are my unconscious," he says. "Everything was black and white or in really strange color. I can't escape photography—even the art I looked at was mostly photographs of art."

Tansey attended art school in California rather than a traditional liberal-arts college, then went to graduate school in art at Hunter College in Manhattan. He does not leave New York very much. (His wife, Jean Tansey, works in obstetrics.) He spends most of his time in his personal picture library, which is filled with loose-leaf notebooks (with names like "Meta Motifs and Icons in Crisis") containing hundreds of thousands of images that he has clipped from every imaginable source, from *Popular Mechanics* to Michelangelo. He continues to clip. He has become, it sometimes seems, the playful pedant of pop. The very surfeit of the images, together with the desire to bring some significant order to the sprawl, makes his studio a telling symbol of contemporary art.

Magritte was a particular revelation to Tansey. The Belgian Surrealist once described eight different ways to bring about "the crisis of the object"—one of which is to unsettle objects through putting them in an unlikely context. Instead of objects, Tansey unsettles the often limiting styles in which we represent the world to ourselves. Like Magritte, he employs a fairly flat-footed method of painting that enhances what is strange or mysterious in the imagery. He paints in monochrome, and his pictures often recall the photography and illustration familiar earlier in the century. The monochromatic style helps unify an art that celebrates diversity.

To make the pictures themselves, Tansey uses a paradoxical means—sophisticated finger painting. This may reflect the feeling (rife among artists now) of being both too smart and too dumb to paint, of having to start from scratch. Tansey covers the canvas with paint and then "pulls" the figures out from the background by removing bits of paint, which exposes the white underneath. He has only six hours before the paint dries. He often uses his fingers. "I like to pull white out from below, to bring out the highlights with my fingers, to equate visual sensation with tactile sensation."

He also likes to render an object with the object itself—to paint twigs with twigs—a form of sympathetic magic that is still another way to mix metaphors and ways of knowing. In Tansey's art, thought often turns into texture; in *Mont Sainte-Victoire*, he is proud of how the watery reflection of the clouds above the mountain becomes the rock of Plato's cave. He has devised dozens of tools to provide varying effects when removing paint. As he grows more adept, it becomes less fair to argue, as some have, that his pictures are one-liners without formal interest.

Yet it is certainly true that (as in Magritte) the mysterious content is what is most powerful in his art. Tansey does not spend much time in his downstairs studio, where he paints. His principal world is upstairs in the picture library, where he often works all night, smoking cigars and thinking with pictures. He photocopies images, tacks them to the wall, juxtaposes them with other images, looking, hoping, for the inspired meeting. And when he gets tight, he spins the wheels. □

PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD EBERLE


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DESPERATELY SEEKING SUSAN

Journalist Susan Crosland left Baltimore to take British politics and society by storm. Now she sails home with her sexy novel to make waves in the U.S.

BY AUBERON WAUGH

Who is Susan Crosland? America lost sight of her when she left her Maryland home as a very young woman to seek freedom, fame, and fortune in Britain. Never mind that she was a young woman with two infant daughters in tow, and an English husband she had found in Baltimore. She is a rare example of the buccaneer female returning from the New World to conquer the Old. Other American women have broken through the rigid lines of London society, but they have nearly all been heiresses married into the aristocracy. Susan Crosland had no fortune: a pretty face, a pretty wit, and an engaging old-Baltimore manner carried her to the top of one of the meanest and most competitive professions in Britain. Journalism is also considered one of the least-loved callings, but her place in London society remained serene. When she married her second husband, the brilliant young Labour politician Anthony Crosland, in 1964, he immediately soared off to become a Cabinet minister. At the time of his sudden death, in 1977, he was secretary of state for foreign affairs. Her long period of mourning produced the strange, haunting biography *Tony Crosland* (Cape, 1982), which can be found in nearly every intelligent, literate English household, but was never published in the United States.



Susan Crosland's steamy novels depict international power brokers behind the scenes—"worlds I know intimately."

America caught at least one glimpse of her in the course of her dizzy rise in London. In 1976, at the time of the U.S. bicentennial celebrations, the Queen of England visited the former colony on the royal yacht, *Britannia*. Apart from her husband, Prince Philip, various ladies-in-waiting and court officials, and one Foreign Office mandarin, the only guests on board were the foreign secretary, Anthony Crosland, and his embarrassingly attractive, much younger American wife, Susan.

Susan distinguished herself on this visit at an official banquet given by the Queen for President Ford at the British Embassy in Washington. Sitting one down from the Queen, between Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, she found the heat oppressive, passed out, and broke her jaw. This was scarcely her proudest moment, but messages of condolence soon arrived from the U.S. president, vice president, and secretary of state, and the Queen and prime minister of England.

It was not a bad way to return to the little old country—a young woman who had left it virtually penniless to seek her fortune in England only a few years earlier, returning aboard the Queen of England's yacht to entertain the president of the United States at dinner.

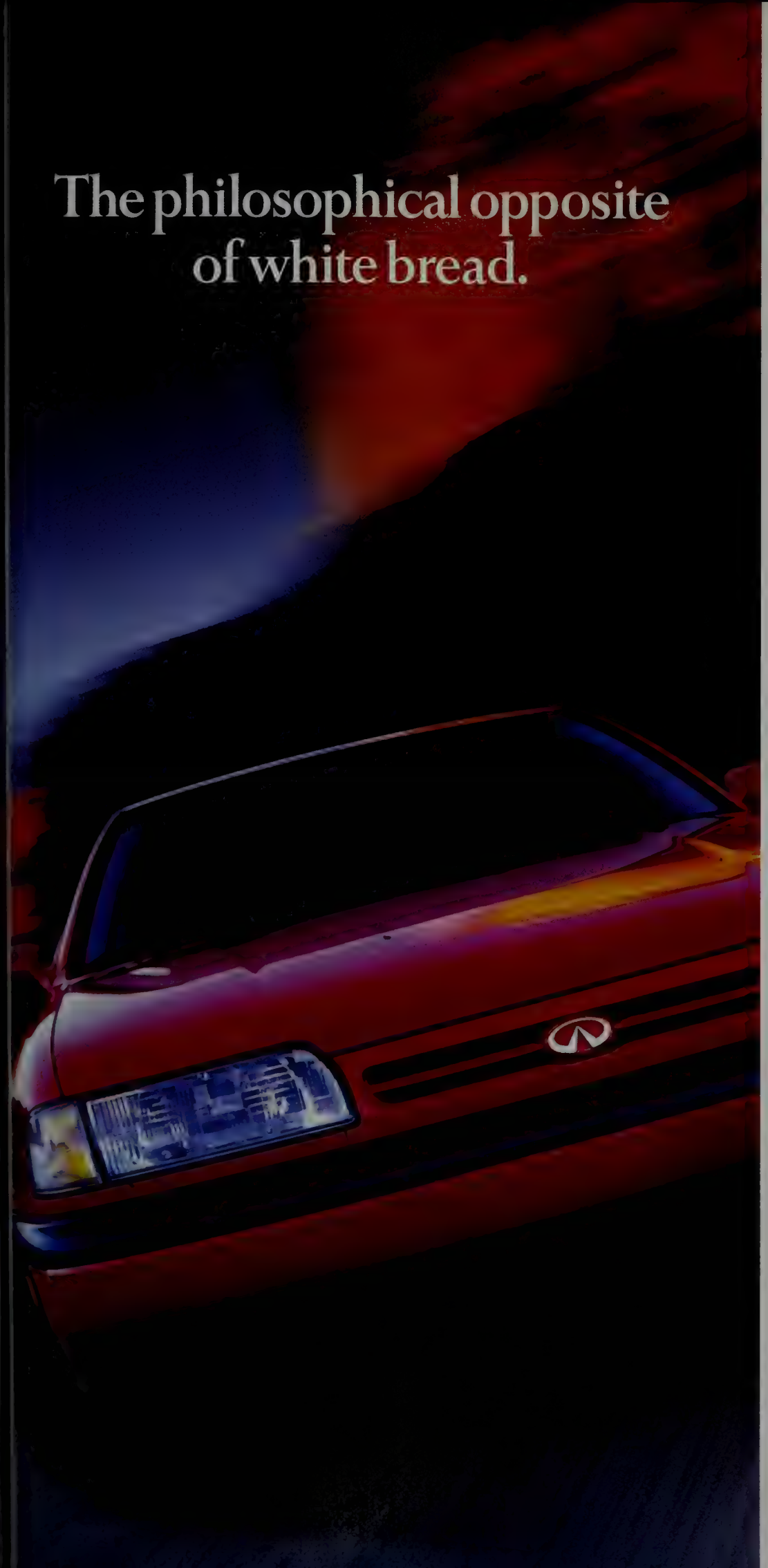
America will get another chance to see her in May, when she arrives to promote her blockbuster erotic thriller, *Dangerous Games*. Five years ago, Crosland decided to try her hand at writing best-selling novels. The first, about a coltish American sculptress of twenty-three, newly arrived in London in the middle of an affair with a Jewish American academic who seems dangerously to resemble Dr. Kissinger, was called *Ruling Passions*. The heroine, Daisy Brewster, marries an English politician who later becomes defense secretary in London just as her American lover becomes secretary of defense in Washington...

That book went straight onto the best-seller lists in Britain and did well in the United States. But it is the second novel, *Dangerous Games*, which is being geared up to hit the big time in America.

This time she spans the power structures on two continents. Her heroine is Georgie Chase, attractive, successful editor of a well-known New York newsmagazine at the dangerous age of thirty-two, awkwardly married to a famous Washington political columnist and languidly considering an affair with Jock, a gorilla-like lobbyist and power broker who may be the most powerful man in Washington, and whose amoral assistant, Lisa, seduces Georgie's husband. Georgie's best friend is married to (dare we guess?) an English Cabinet minister,

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whose philandering habits get him into a serious mix-up with the I.R.A. . . . In addition to some memorable sex scenes and a terrorist double murder, somebody (one of the more attractive characters, I thought) comes to an appalling, sticky end between two Doberman pinschers.

When Random House publishes *Dangerous Games* in May, a woman who is famous in Britain will be launched in the land of her birth and upbringing. American readers will want to know more about this countrywoman of theirs, whose story is no less bizarre than anything that has tripped off her pen since she became a novelist. Who on earth is she?

To be asked to compose a profile of Susan Crosland is rather like being asked to sing an operatic aria before Pavarotti, or dance a pas seul in front of Dame Margot Fonteyn and Nijinsky. Long before she became the thinking reader's Jackie Collins, Crosland more or less pioneered her own style of journalistic profile, which has since been imitated everywhere. It relied upon the distinguished, usually male subject's discovering a new joy in talking about himself to an attractive interviewer who was sympathetic and challenging simultaneously. She wrote these profiles mostly for *The Sunday Times,* and her subjects included Lord Hailsham when he was Britain's tetchy lord chancellor, King Juan Carlos of Spain, the King of Morocco, the Sultan of Brunei and his wives, and Prime Ministers Shimon Peres, Yitzhak Shamir, and Felipe González. The pieces were later collected in two books, *Behind the Image* in 1974, and *Looking Out, Looking In* in 1987. An example from the first shows her ease and perspicacity with a man as prickly as Gore Vidal:

He remains utterly mystified as to why the Western world *will* try to combine lust and compassion. "The two are separate and most people know it. But they won't face up to it. Instead they put themselves through all this misery about 'love.' " . . .

Supposing, I said, you had some human beings who apart from romanticism might intellectually choose to combine body and soul in order to heighten a relationship. "Then they're putting all their eggs in one basket," he replies. He would never let himself in for the extreme pain that attends one partner in such an intertwined relationship.

Three years later, a widowed Susan would discover at first hand the pain that Vidal chose to avoid.

Her White House interview with Nancy Reagan in the second volume illustrates her eye for the telling detail:

She crosses her legs and folds her arms—not in the aggressive way, but instead tucking her hands under her upper arms, seeming almost to be protecting herself. In our hour-plus together, she unfolds her arms only to make a graceful gesture to illustrate a point. Then she wraps herself up again. It's her face that shows the most response. The enormous eyes are fixed on me throughout—except when she laughs or speaks of an acutely painful subject. . . . Then her face withdraws its expression. "The early childhood certainly left its mark," she says.

When I put the question to her about the rumored appearance of Henry Kissinger in her first novel, Crosland gives a soft laugh. "All that speculation about Henry K. being the original for Carl Myer in *Ruling Passions* was rather hard on Dr. Kissinger. Just because in real life he and Tony were their countries' foreign ministers at the same time, and Henry ate in our kitchen and so on, why should that lead readers to suppose the real-life situation was remotely like the sexual triangle in my novel?" Methought the lady did protest too much. "Apart from anything else, in the novel the American Cabinet minister conducts his clandestine affair with Daisy in that high-security suite at Claridge's. So far as I can recall, I've never in my life visited a gentleman in his suite at Claridge's, though I once interviewed Porfirio Rubirosa in his suite at the Ritz and barely escaped 'with my clothes undisturbed'—as the police like to phrase these matters.

Long before she became the thinking reader's Jackie Collins, Crosland pioneered her own style of journalistic profile.

"I had to ask Ray Seitz to tell me in detail how on earth an American Cabinet minister in charge of the nation's defense—all those guys with their walkie-talkies perpetually outside his door—is able to keep an affair private. Ray said the aide is the key."

Raymond Seitz's latest manifestation is as the American ambassador to Britain. "When I sent him the final draft to make sure I had got the security arrangements right, obviously I sent only the relevant pages. Ray complained bitterly at the bottom of one page, where I had no more security questions and broke off just where Daisy begins to remove her clothes." Susan begins to laugh again. " 'Holy cow! You cut me off just at the good part!' was scrawled in his red ink."

The Susan Crosland who can call up such high-level assistance when composing her torrid blockbusters is a blonde, feline, very attractive, very high-class single woman in her fifties. She lives in a large and beautiful London apartment in one of South Kensington's garden squares. She also has an old millhouse by a stream near Oxford, where she goes on weekends.

In her smart London apartment, she gives small but costly dinner parties of great elegance, waited on by a smiling Spanish maid. At them, one is likely to meet such normal people as Ray Seitz or Ewen Fergusson, the British ambassador in Paris; a serving Cabinet minister, perhaps, like Michael Heseltine, with his wife, Anne, or one who has just resigned in dramatic circumstances, like Nigel Lawson; Britain's most glamorous TV anchorwoman, Anna Ford, perhaps; a publisher or two, a shadow minister from the Labour opposition, even a journalist. What is memorable about these parties is that despite the grandeur of the guests they are always happy events, full of laughter and friendliness; the guests seem to be mysteriously united by their affection for the hostess who brought them together, with her soft Maryland voice, her southern hospitality, and her reckless sense of enjoyment.

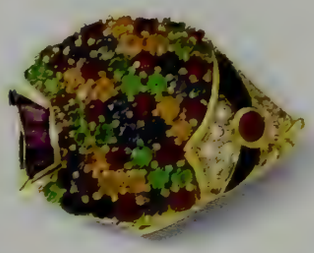
Her apartment is also her office, where she writes, and she refuses to meet anyone for lunch. "I work in the day and play in the evening"—although even then she insists on waking up in the morning alone. At all other times, she lives by herself in that large and beautiful apartment, without even a cat to disturb her solitude. Mrs. Crosland is alone. And she loves it.

Just as she struck out as a young woman to make her way in England, her two daughters have chosen to move on—one slender, dark beauty to Los Angeles, the other slender, dark beauty to Greece—and, while remaining on the warmest sisterly terms with them both, Susan is free.

"It is a terrific sense of freedom when


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your daughters have flown the nest. I love my freedom. I love the irresponsibility,'' she says. At the time of writing her most serious work to date, the moving biography of her husband, written while she was still in mourning for him, she announced that she was ''monoerotic²''—incapable of being sexually attracted to two people at the same time. Now she is not so sure. She is very happy to keep her friends in separate compartments, allowing them to call on her, but she is equally determined to live for the present, to make no commitment to anyone.

Somewhere in her fifties, she reached the position most fervently desired by a large part of modern womanhood. She can do what she likes. Her erotic thrillers are a success. She has the respect and admiration of her friends, and anyone who inquires into the private compartments of her life is likely to get short shrift: ''What's it got to do with you?'' (always said in that soft, musical voice). What remains to be said is that her route to this happy state has been a somewhat circuitous one.

It was in the mid-fifties that a clever young English politician named Anthony Crosland published a book called *The Future of Socialism*. The book caused something of a sensation because, although it was written by one of the leading socialist thinkers of the day, a bulwark of the English Labour Party, it seemed to say—thirty-five years before Boris Yeltsin reached the same conclusion—that socialism, although undoubtedly a very beautiful idea, did not actually work. It had no future, at any rate in the sense that Marx, Engels, and Lenin defined it. Crosland retained some romantic notions about liberty and equality, believing that increased prosperity would somehow be able to finance them both in a Keynesian mixed economy, but he accepted that the old Marxian idea of class struggle leading to the dictatorship of the proletariat had been discredited. The effect was instantaneous. Nobody paused to consider that liberty and equality might be uneasy bedfellows, not to say mutually exclusive. Where previously it had been considered rather smart to be left-wing, it suddenly became rather smarter to be slightly less left-wing. Crosland was the hero of the hour.

Just then, Susan Catling set foot in England for the first time. Born Susan Watson, daughter of a distinguished, Pulitzer Prize–winning journalist and


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holder of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, Susan had divided her childhood between Maryland, home of her maternal family, called Owens, since the seventeenth century, and the Vermont shore of Lake Champlain, where the Watsons had settled. The Owenses were tobacco growers who went to Baltimore after the Civil War. One of them became editor of the Baltimore *Sun*. Mark Watson, Susan's father, also became an editor of *The Sun*, although he was chiefly famous as the most read and most highly respected defense correspondent in America.

Nothing could have been more natural than that on graduating from Vassar at the age of twenty the popular "Sunie" Watson should marry a tall, handsome, sardonic Englishman on the staff of the Baltimore *Sun*, Patrick Skene Catling, soon to be posted on a temporary assignment to the London bureau, with the new joys of an expense account.

"All that speculation about Henry K. being the original for Carl Myer in *Ruling Passions* was rather hard on Dr. Kissinger."

Sunie, now Susan Catling, accompanied him, with their two baby daughters. The marriage was in a somewhat rocky state. Now, with a nanny to look after her daughters, Susan had the first taste of a freedom she had never known. When the Suez fiasco erupted, Patrick was sent to cover it for the Baltimore *Sun*, on the time-honored American principle that Britain and Egypt, being both abroad, must be pretty well next door to each other. While her husband was away, Susan went to a small cocktail party in South Kensington, where for the first time she met Anthony Crosland.

One afternoon, near the end of the Catlings' stay in London, as Susan records in her biography, Tony Crosland said to her, "I'm putting my promiscuity aside until you leave England."

"Why?" she replied. "You've taken trouble enough to make me understand that it doesn't diminish what we have."

"Which it doesn't," said Crosland. "But I want to make the most of this."

The year after this endearingly brusque English courtship, the Catlings were back in London, but under different circumstances. Patrick had left *The Sun* and gone to work for *Punch*. Money was short. Susan presented herself to the editor of the *Sunday Express*, apologizing for having no evidence that she had been a practicing journalist in America. "I left my cuttings in Baltimore." Whether he believed this blatant lie or not, she got her first job as a journalist, and within months her profiles had begun to make her name nationally. "The real miracle," she says, "was discovering that my earnings made it possible—just—to support my two children on my own." She separated formally from Patrick—which may confirm male fears that if a wife goes out to work she can manage quite well without a husband.

Her marriage to Crosland was an extraordinarily happy one—very rare in the upper rungs of British politics. "It is odd to find yourself suddenly at the center of power," she says now. "Most wives have a long time to wait for this and think about it. With me it happened only months after I married Tony, when, at the beginning of 1965, he became secretary of state for education. And except for 1970–74, Labour was in power throughout the thirteen years of our marriage. So when people asked what it's like to be a Cabinet minister's wife, they might as well have asked what it was like to be Tony's wife. Boring it was not."

As head of education, Tony Crosland could put into practice his belief in greater equality. "Obviously," Susan says, "nature will ensure that an elite keeps rising in a democracy, but the state should do its utmost to make it possible for those without money or position or a literate family background to have equal access to the opportunity that a decent education bestows. That's why Tony introduced comprehensive schools in Britain. In things like socialized medicine, Britain is ahead of America. But Americans have always led the way on state education. My American friends could hardly believe it when they discovered that British comprehensive schools are no more and no less than the public-school system that Americans have taken as their right as long as anybody can remember. Yet in 1992, if you please, some Tories are *still* trying to reverse the comprehensive system.

"Thirteen years of Tory government, eleven of them under Thatcher, have had


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this curious sponging effect on the public memory. You have to make a conscious effort to recall the time when the Labour Party was exciting, heavyweight, sexy. What excited so many of the intelligentsia and brought them into the Labour Party was the rigor of Tony's argument for greater equality. He wasn't proposing a gray egalitarianism that would free individuals from gross injustice only to lock them into bureaucracy." She laughs. "He was all for us having a healthy trace of the anarchist and libertarian, and not too much of the prig and the prude."

The high point came in 1976, when Crosland was made foreign secretary. "Henry Kissinger was, of course, the secretary of state, and just embarking on the shuttle diplomacy with southern Africa. He made a detour to London in his specially fitted plane, imagining the new British foreign secretary would be happy to drive to Heathrow and join him for a talk. Instead he was told that the foreign secretary was busy in his Grimsby constituency—hundreds of miles away in a hinterland, so far as Henry was concerned." Kissinger was forced to change planes and fly to an R.A.F. field near Grimsby. Susan Crosland smiles at the initial reactions of the two men. "At the meeting, Tony was taken by Henry's intellect and humor. The feeling wasn't mutual.

"Nor was it mutual when they next sat beside each other, at an O.E.C.D. meeting in Luxembourg. 'Tony absolutely refused to go along with convention,' Henry told me later. 'Meetings are meant to be of two hours' duration. Each time a minister repeated himself, Tony said, "We've already heard that; let's move on to the next point." The meeting was over in half an hour. He treated me with great respect—that is to say, with less disdain than he treated the others. I thought of him as a colossal pain in the neck.' 'I may fall in love with Henry,' Tony told me when he got back from Luxembourg.

"I forget when the love affair became mutual—what Henry described as a unique relationship between foreign ministers: 'We got along, not because we agreed or disagreed, but because we were on the same wavelength, two odd-balls intellectually interested in problems not just because we were foreign ministers.' "

"You have to make a conscious effort to recall the time when the Labour Party was exciting, heavyweight, sexy."



Tony and Susan Crosland on their wedding day, 1964. Of their life together, she says, "Boring it was not."

For a moment, the blue-green eyes look off. "Tony and I were to visit President Carter early in 1977. Just before we were to fly to Washington, Tony died."

Crosland was struck down in almost unbearably poignant circumstances while still at the height of his powers. Ten months after he became foreign secretary, he and Susan had a first weekend to themselves. She was writing in the same room where he was working on his papers, when he said, "Something has happened." As she turned in her chair, he said, "I can't feel my right side." After a massive brain hemorrhage, he lay in a coma for six days, with Susan lying by his side. The description of these events in her biography of him must be one of the most harrowing sequences in modern literature.

"When Henry and Nancy Kissinger came to see me in London afterwards," Susan resumes, "and learned I'd be going to see my sister in Washington in May, they said I must come to a small birthday dinner the British ambassador was giving for Henry. I said I wasn't going—I led a very withdrawn life for a long time. Henry said it would just be a family affair. It was the strangest birthday party I have ever attended. Three people's lives had altered dramatically since we had all dined at the British Embassy in Washington with the Queen ten months earlier. Kissinger was now out of office. Tony was dead. And the British ambassador had learned earlier in the day that he had been sacked by the new British foreign secretary."

It took her six years to return to normal life, three and a half of them spent writing the biography. She refers to those six years as "gray" years. "It wasn't until I finally returned to the world of the living that I discovered colors can be drained by one's state of mind. Driving along a country road past a hill of trees I had seen a thousand times during those six years, I thought, What fantastic colors—and realized that throughout those years the trees had been gray."

Asked about the effect of the Tory years under Margaret Thatcher, Crosland says, "Margaret Thatcher hit a populist chord with a lot of her policies, and the Labour Party has had to accept that a number of them—trade-union reform, people being able to buy the council houses they have rented from the state—are here to stay. So Labour has had difficulty in asserting boldly how its values differ from those of the Tories. The result has been a kind of fluffiness in British politics—which God knows you didn't have under Thatcher—and too many Britons have been left with the uninspiring feeling that they might as well vote for the party that 'does the most for me,' as if one were deciding which is the most competent accountant."

So far, however, she hasn't considered transplanting herself back to the United States. "I love going back to visit my family. But I also love the independence you have in another country. And in the present climate in America, I think I should go mad with all the political correctness."

This gloomy view of her home country is not reflected in *Dangerous Games*, in which leading politicians on both sides of the Atlantic are flawed, to say the least. "Yes," she says, "but it is only the sinister Washington lobbyist and his beguiling young sidekick who are totally amoral. Actually, I developed a soft spot for both of them. However



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awful Jock is, he has an extraordinary vitality, and he's funny. I can excuse a lot if the person is funny enough. And the amoral Lisa is gutsy: her calculating deceitfulness is the only way she knows to pull herself up in the world. But I didn't want her to win in the end."

Each of Susan's novels has produced guessing games: Whom are the characters based on in real life?

"Groan. O.K., a lot of the characters are inspired by real politicians and real media people I know. But then my fantasy takes over. The trouble is, nobody quite believes me when I say it is fantasy, because the worlds I describe—how power brokers in Washington, New York, and London behave behind the scenes—are the worlds I know intimately."

In an interview with Rosemary Carpenter, of the London *Daily Express*, when her first novel came out, in April 1989, Susan Crosland produced one explanation for why she has not married again. No one could ever replace Tony, she said. Hence her separate compartments.

Carpenter concluded, politely enough, that there can't be many men who wouldn't be pleased to fill one of these compartments, and no doubt she is right. But the interview had started on a slightly more puzzled note, as befits a young reporter approaching a senior figure of the British left.

"Susan Crosland is a truly sensual woman. She has just written a very raunchy novel set in Fleet Street and in Westminster, and the sex scenes, of which there are many, are arousing and adroit. . . . Susan Crosland is discreet, but one gets the impression that she is writing as much from her own sexual experience as from imagination."

I tremble to think this may be the case with her latest novel, *Dangerous Games*, which contains descriptions of several situations—handjobs in the office and the like—in which no friend would like to imagine her. If we analyze what makes Susan Crosland a successful practitioner in a crowded profession, the first quality that shines through is that she is a brilliant storyteller. Whether from narrative tension, sexual tension, or involvement with the characters, she makes us want to keep turning the pages. It is comparatively unimportant that, when she writes about presidents, monarchs, secretaries of state, and the rest of them, she knows the people she is writing about. The other important ingredient is her charm, her enjoyment of life, and, yes, let us face it, her wonderfully sporting attitude to sex. □


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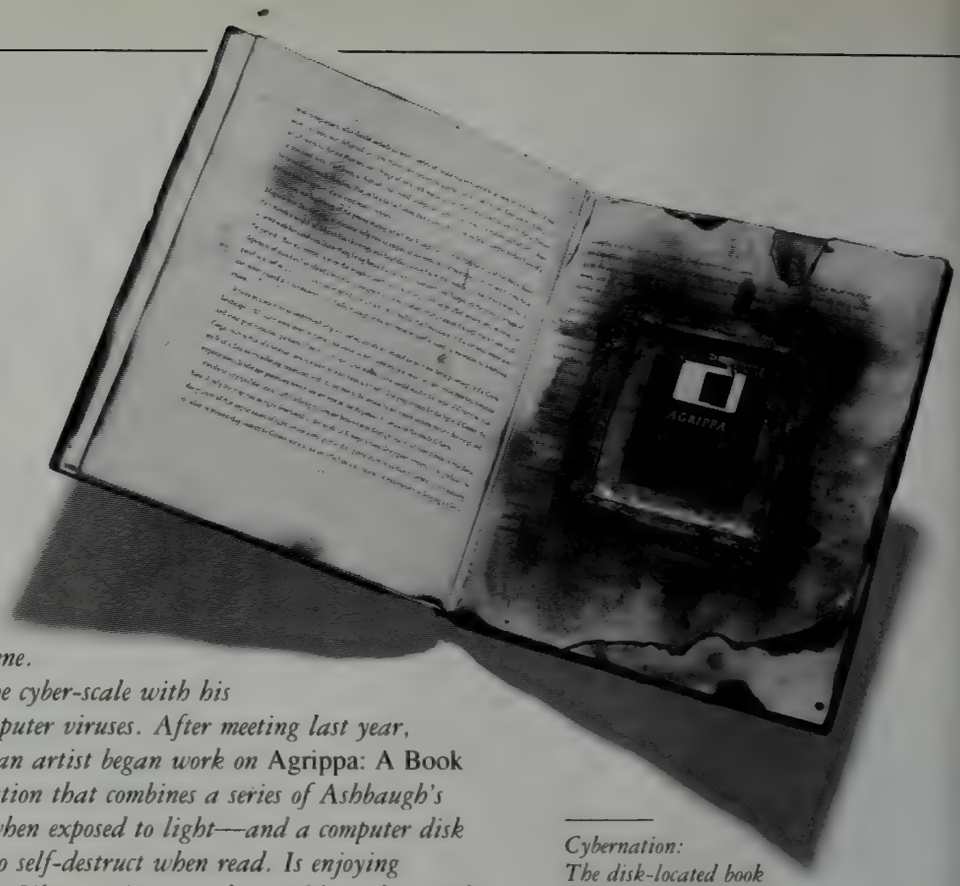
Sigourney Weaver takes being a tomboy to *extremis*. In *The Year of Living Dangerously*, she waded through waves of humidity to reach the harboring arms of Mel Gibson, her damp forehead dazed with want. As Dian Fossey, she forged an I-Thou relationship with *Gorillas in the Mist*. Her most famous stint on-screen has been slaying ghoulies as the avenging anima of *Alien* and *Aliens*. Now she's doing a Kojak in *Alien*^{3}—her head shaved after being infected with space cooties. (*Ewwwwwww.*) *Alien*^{3} promises to inflict gruesome thrills, but it'd be sweet to see Weaver return to lovers' lane. It seems ages since a leading man has basked in her shade here on earth. Enough rockets—more romance!

—JAMES WOLCOTT

Photograph by HELMUT NEWTON



Book Lark



Cybernation: The disk-located book (above) *and Gibson* (left).

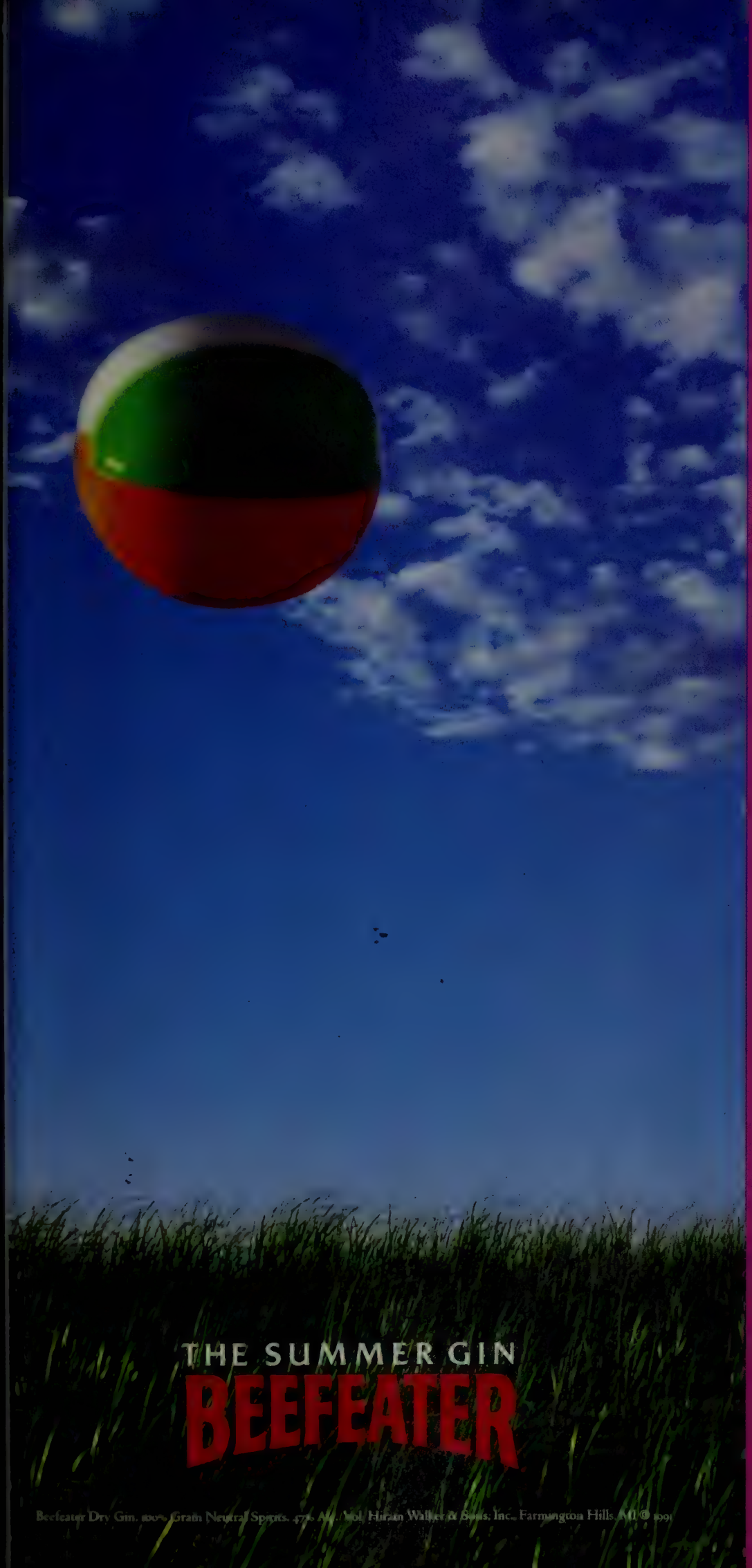
At six feet five and 150 pounds, William Gibson is the beanstalk giant of cyberpunk whose novels have transformed the sci-fi scene. Dennis Ashbaugh has weighed in on the cyber-scale with his massive replicas of DNA codes and computer viruses. After meeting last year, the Vancouver writer and the Manhattan artist began work on Agrippa: A Book of the Dead, *a mind-bending collaboration that combines a series of Ashbaugh's otherworldly etchings—which mutate when exposed to light—and a computer disk containing a Gibson tale programmed to self-destruct when read. Is enjoying* Agrippa *worth destroying it? Chuckles Gibson, "Anyone who would purchase such an annoying contrivance deserves the quandary."* —JIM RASENBERGER



With Mother's Way

With the oval face of a Raphael Madonna, photographer Priscilla Rattazzi seems physiognomically predisposed to a strong maternal instinct. In her new book, *Children* (Rizzoli), Rattazzi trains her motherly lens on her son, Maxi, and a motley gang of friends as they sleep, cut capers, and throw tantrums. Rattazzi's older sister, Ilaria, an art therapist, wrote the accompanying text. "We come from a very big, very close family," explains Rattazzi, now married to publishing whiz Chris Whittle. Her distinguished clan includes Agnellis and von Furstenbergs—all pictured in her first book, *Una Famiglia*. Hoping to repeat the sellout success of her previous effort, *Best Friends*, an album of celebrities with their canines, Rattazzi says, "Dogs are easier to photograph than kids—they cooperate better." Next she's switching from unruly subjects to "something completely inanimate: landscapes." —AMY FINE COLLINS

Mother love: Priscilla Rattazzi with her children, Andrea and Maxi.



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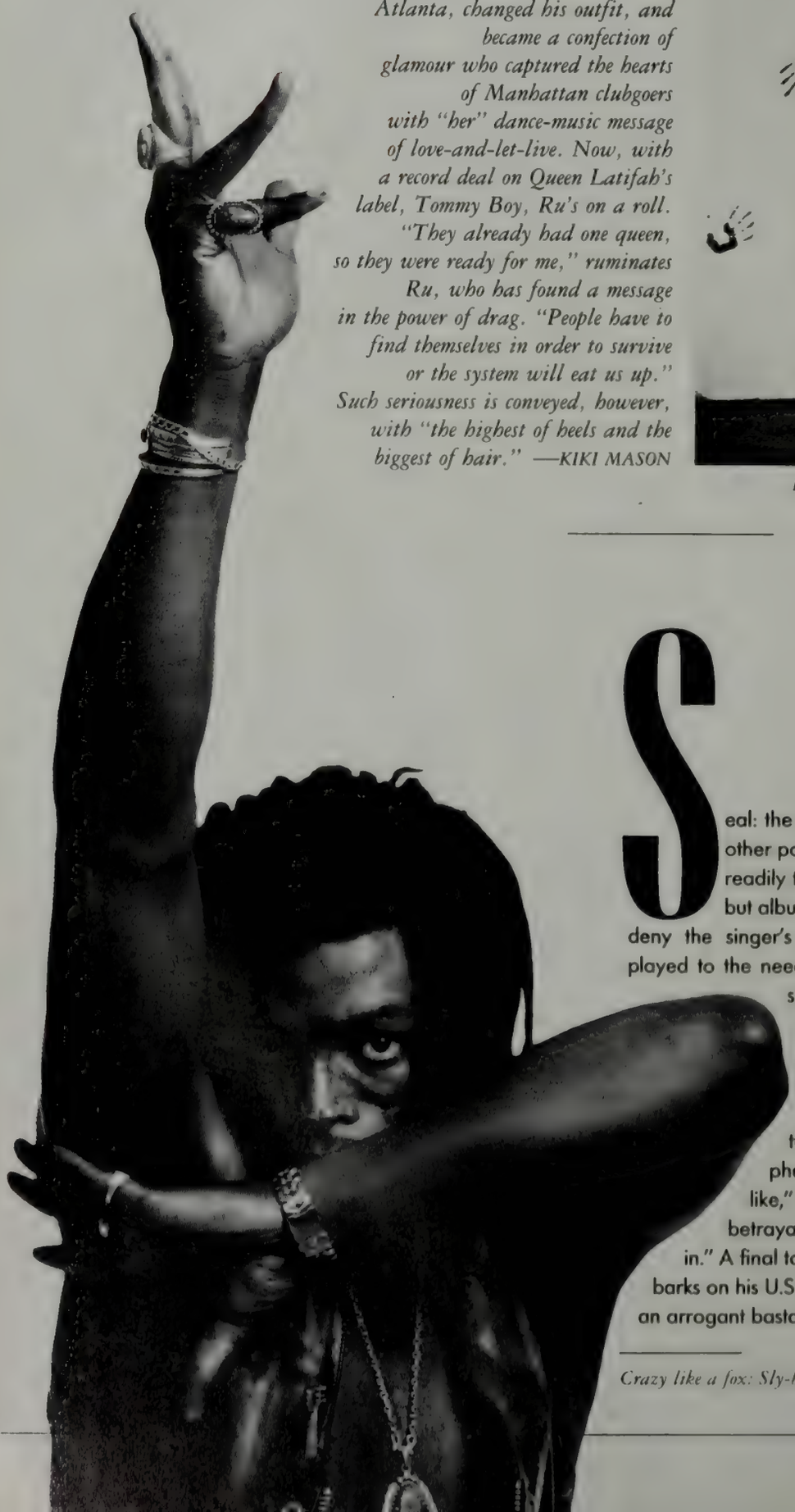
Ru Awakening

Ten years ago RuPaul arrived from Atlanta, changed his outfit, and became a confection of glamour who captured the hearts of Manhattan clubgoers with "her" dance-music message of love-and-let-live. Now, with a record deal on Queen Latifah's label, Tommy Boy, Ru's on a roll. "They already had one queen, so they were ready for me," ruminates Ru, who has found a message in the power of drag. "People have to find themselves in order to survive or the system will eat us up." Such seriousness is conveyed, however, with "the highest of heels and the biggest of hair." —KIKI MASON



GEORGE HOLZ

Life is a drag: RuPaul takes a stand.



Golden Seal

Seal: the musical messiah for the millennium or just another pop star with a powerful machine? While he has readily taken to the trappings of stardom since his debut album hit American airwaves last year, no one can deny the singer's desperate romanticism, which has skillfully played to the needs of a desperate time. Perhaps the world is smitten with Seal because he represents the jumbled clash of cultures in which we find ourselves. (Of Brazilian and Nigerian parentage, the six-foot-four-incher grew up in the U.K.) "My agenda is just to get through this alive. It can be very glamorous and sycophantic, which is what I imagined it would be like," Seal says of his new stardom. "Then there's betrayal and loneliness because your space is closing in." A final tongue-in-chiseled-cheek riposte before he embarks on his U.S. tour this summer: "Just tell people that I'm not an arrogant bastard." —K.M.

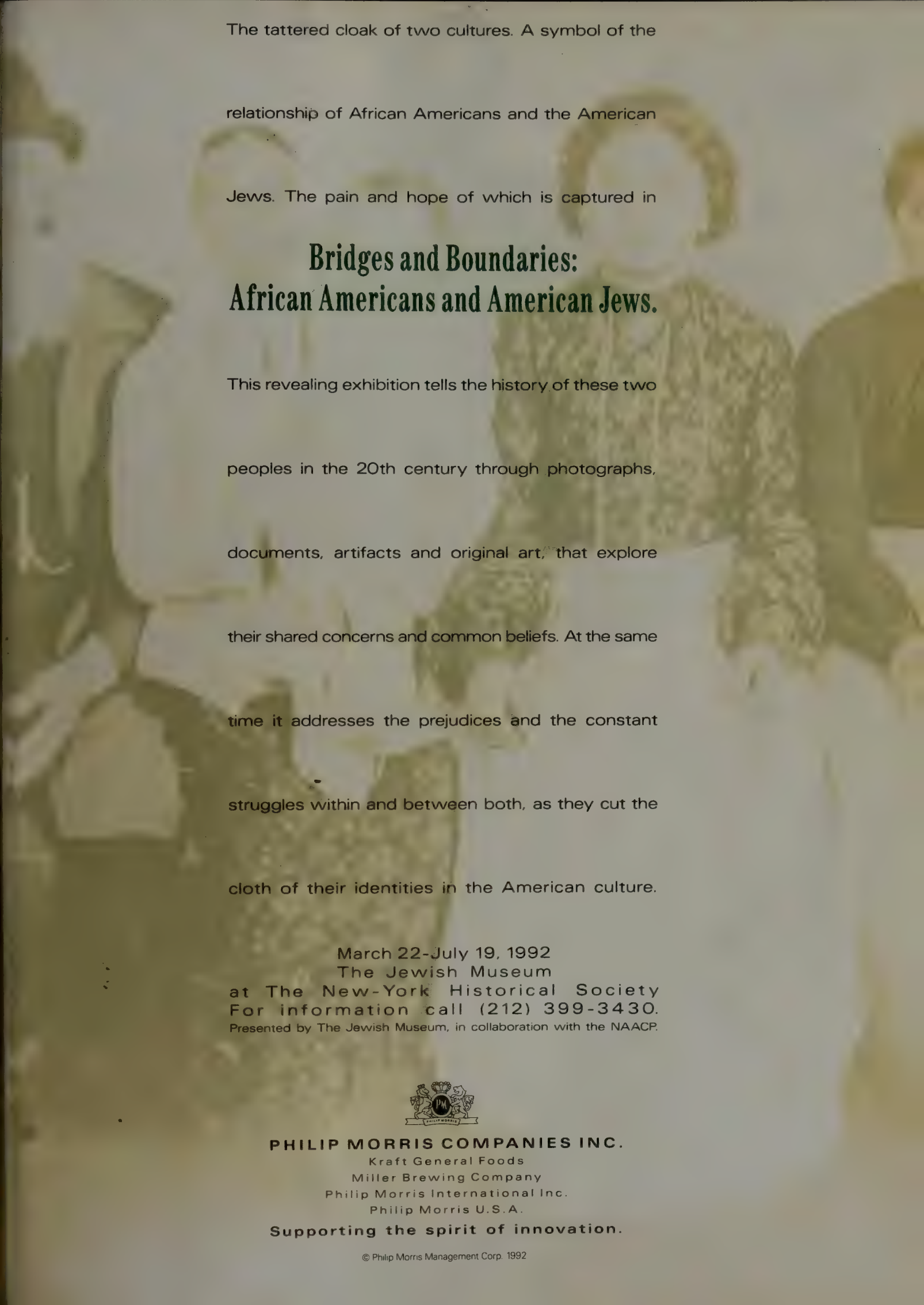
Crazy like a fox: Sly-boy Seal.



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Culture Bash

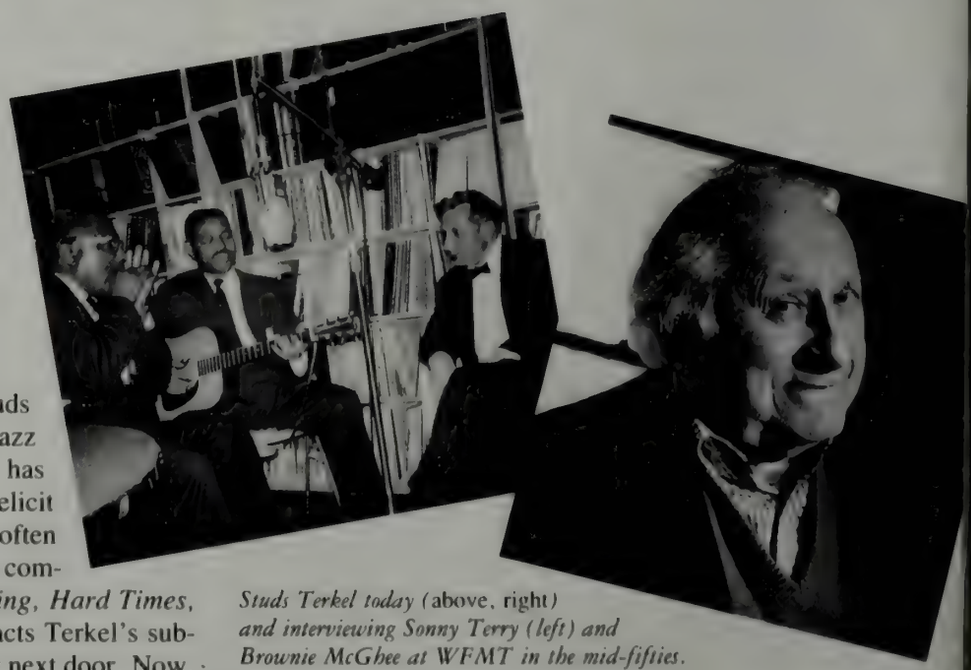


Method madness: Actors Studio alumni (left to right) Parsons, Gazzara, and Burstyn.

Ben Gazzara, Ellen Burstyn, and Estelle Parsons return to Broadway in Shimada, *the story of an Australian bicycle company that becomes divided when a Japanese buyout is proposed. Also starring Mako, the play, written by Jill Shearer and directed by Simon Phillips, explores the increasingly shrill clash of Eastern and Western cultures. First produced by the Melbourne Theatre Company in 1987,* Shimada *was subsequently staged by the Royal Queensland Theatre; both productions received raves. Will the play succeed in captivating Americans? That remains to be seen. What is certain, however, is that it will cause its Broadway audiences to examine how politics is finally rooted in our soiled psyches.*

—PENELOPE SCHMART

Talking Terkel



Studs Terkel today (above, right) *and interviewing Sonny Terry (left) and Brownie McGhee at WFMT in the mid-fifties.*

For more than five decades, Studs Terkel, the esteemed Chicago jazz aficionado and radio journalist, has been blessed with the ability to elicit not only honesty from people but often an unexpected eloquence. To date he has compiled eight oral histories, including *Working*, *Hard Times*, and *"The Good War,"* but beneath the facts Terkel's subject is always the same: the soul of the guy next door. Now, as he jauntily enters the portals of Octogenaria, he offers a timely chronicle, *Race* (New Press). From Mamie Mobley, whose son, Emmett Till, was murdered in Mississippi, igniting the civil-rights movement, to the confessions of a former Exalted Cyclops of the Ku Klux Klan who became a union organizer for all races, to the ten-year-old black girl who tells Terkel, "I might not live to be grown up—my life wasn't promised to me," they are, as Joseph Conrad phrased it, "human beings that will bleed to a prick, and are moving in a visible world." *Race* reverberates with both the pain and the innate nobility of ordinary people that are Terkel's domain. He has been called a "natural resource," but more than that he is, to borrow a phrase from his late pal Nelson Algren, "a conscience in touch with humanity."

—RICHARD MERKIN


GIORGIO ARMANI
OCCHIALI

Defining Woman

"If I ever should get an Emmy," says Dixie Carter, "and it doesn't look like it'll happen until I have to accept it in my walker, I'll say, 'Don't give up. Life *does* begin at forty.' " The sardonic late bloomer continues to branch out beyond her most famous assignment—playing Julia, one of TV's smart, sassy Designing Women. She's released a record, *Dixie Carter Sings John Wallowitch Live at the Carlyle*. And she's coming back to the same boîte with an eclectic mix of songs by Berlin, Gershwin, Coward, and Bob Seger. For all the success of her TV sass, Carter seems most at home in the nightclub world, which is rife with what she calls "smoking and drinking and thinking about the sad loves that are gone." Not that she's having any problems with her husband, actor Hal Holbrook. "He's still fond of me," she says, knocking wood. "He hasn't left me yet." —MICHAEL MUSTO



Whistling Dixie: Carter in her CBS dressing room.

Night-table Reading



Dr. Roberta Bondar *(astronaut):* Silent Spring, *by Rachel Carson (twenty-fifth-anniversary edition; Houghton Mifflin). "I first read it in grade ten. It was the first book that talked about technology adversely affecting the environment."*



Ice-T *(rapper, actor):* Robb Report. *"Essential pimp paraphernalia."*



Robin Leach *(television host):* The Gnole, *by Alan Aldridge (William Heinemann). "This lavishly illustrated Old English–type fairy tale, told in rock 'n' roll language for adults, is a difficult and extraordinary ecological gospel."*



Fran Weissler *(producer):* Savage Grace, *by Natalie Robbins and Steven M. L. Aronson (Dell). "A disturbing, always fascinating true story of family violence among the very rich. . . . It's deeply affecting."*

"Big rig's blockin' the fast lane on 73; we've got standstill to the outer loop." Love those traffic reports. Great. I'm at the outer loop. On my way to the office. Preferably before my boss shows up. We move two feet. At least my legs aren't cramped. My Swift® GT has amazing legroom. More than a Mercedes 300. Oooooohhh. There's an opening. Ease off the clutch...GO. Another ten..., no, fifteen feet. This car is a pocket rocket. If I only had open road ahead...Saturday. I'll take Elli out to that country place for breakfast...with no traffic. At least I'm not burnin' gas like crazy. The Swift's a gas miser. Okay!...clear in the left lane. Put that hammer down...NOW...Damn. I just cut in front of my boss.





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IVANA

From Eastern bloc to writer's block? Alas, no. This month, Ivana Trump unleashes her debut "novel," For Love Alone. And there is life after Donald: with her new Italian millionaire and a pile of business schemes in tow, "La Trumpová" has become the social queen of Mitteleuropa.

BOB COLACELLO *reports from Prague and Saint-Moritz*



EASY WRITER
"It's a commercial woman's novel, but with the quality," says Ivana of her book (about a beautiful Czech skier who marries a rich American, runs a hotel, and goes through a long, drawn-out divorce).

Photographs by ERIC BOMAN • Styled by MARINA SCHIANO

ALL CLOTHES AND JEWELRY BY VALENTINO EXCEPT WHERE NOTED. EARRINGS BY JOSÉ & MARIA BARRERA. BRACELETS BY ELIZABETH TAYLOR FOR BULGARI.

Czechs In





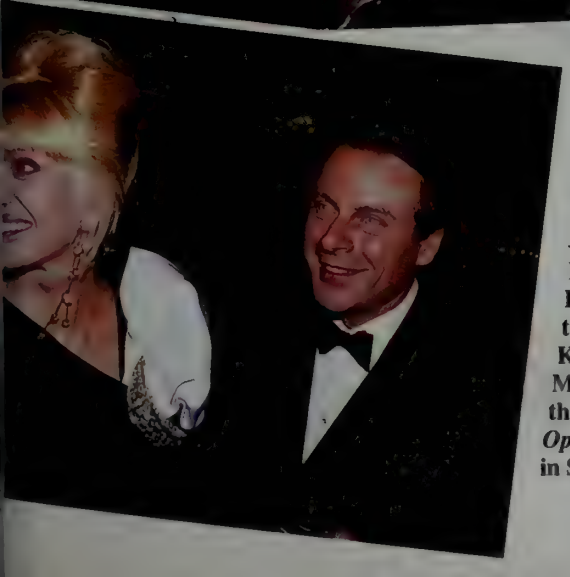
"I've always said that if there was life after Trump," said gossip columnist Nigel Dempster, "Ivana would survive and Donald wouldn't."

THIS PAGE: HAIR BY PIER GIUSEPPE MORONI FOR HAIR STUDIO MARIO; MAKEUP BY LUIGI MESSINA FOR ALDO COPPOLA; JUMPSUIT BY ISAAC MIZRAHI; JEWELRY AND SKI POLES BY MARIE FERRÁ; SKI BOOTS BY NORDICA

Roll out the barrel—we'll have a barrel of fun.'' Ivana Trump is singing along to the three-piece band, heavy on the accordion, that she's hired to entertain her entourage for cocktails at an atmospheric wine cellar in the Old Town of Prague called U Zelené Žáby—the Green Frog. ''I used to come here with the school friends when I was getting the master's degree in the physical education from the Charles University,'' she says, swaying to the music, snapping her fingers, looking as if she's having the time of her life.







And why not? The fairy tale she's been chasing for most of her forty-three years seems to be coming true: the ambitious young skier who immigrated to Canada after she was passed over for Czechoslovakia's 1972 Olympic team is back in town twenty years later as the patroness of the first Prague opera ball to be held since the Communists took over in 1948, reigning over an honorary committee that includes Sir Peter Ustinov and a Bourbon-Parma princess. Thanks to the magic wand of Michael Jackson's ''body sculptor,'' she seems to be more beautiful than when she left—her lips and breasts are fuller, her nose and hips are slimmer. She's certainly more expensively dressed, in a black velvet Oscar de la Renta ball gown decorated with a white satin sash and rhinestone crescent moons.

And the town seems thrilled to have her back. ''They call her La Trumpová,'' a foreign-ministry official notes. ''For the shopgirls dreaming of going to America, she is *the* star.'' With the exceptions of the late, disgraced Robert Maxwell and tennis champions Ivan Lendl and Martina Navratilova, no Czech has bounced higher in the West than Ivana Zelníčková Trump. Her hometown fans don't care if her fame is based almost entirely on her divorce—divorce is commonplace in Czechoslovakia. What galvanizes their attention is her estimated $25 million divorce settlement, especially the $10 million in cash. That may be next year's curtains on Park Avenue, but in a country where most people make less than $1,600 a year, it represents unimaginable riches.

BUTTONS AND BEAUX
Ivana with, *from top*, Jiří Štaidl at the Munich Olympics, 1972; Ken Lieberman in New York, May 1991; Riccardo Mazzucchelli at the Plaza, November 1991. *Opposite page*, piste-elegance in Saint-Moritz.

La Trumpová's photograph is on the cover of *Parabola*, the local TV guide, the weekend she's in Prague, alongside those of Princess Diana, Princess Stephanie, and Omar Sharif. She's stopped for autographs in the lobby of the new Hotel Diplomat, where her opera-ball guests are staying gratis. One of the best French restaurants in the city has come up with an ''Ivana Cocktail''—champagne, orange juice, and brandy-sodden cherries, served in a sugar-rimmed glass.

The opera-house director, Karel Drgáč, wants to erect an ''Ivana Tower''—a two-story glass rotunda, where drinks would be served during intermissions—and hopes to persuade Ivana to underwrite its projected $1 million cost. (She's ''studying'' the plans; she made a $5,000 donation for the opera ball itself.) ''We are so grateful to Madame Trump,'' gushes Drgáč's wife, ''for coming to Prague and bringing such a glamorous group.''

Ivana's group could be called glamorous only in Eastern Europe, where four decades of enforced classlessness has wiped out any ability to distinguish between real and ersatz society and where there is also a desperate desire to mimic the most recently missed decade, the piss-elegant eighties. Among those singing along with Ivana at the Green Frog are a water-supply tycoon from Queens, New York, and his pleasant wife; a Lugano-based charter-airline king, crowned with a silvery toupee; a Milan sheet manufacturer; a Zurich plastic surgeon; an energetic London P.R. woman in an animal-print shift; and a sleek Palestinian extra man sporting three diamond pinkie rings on one pinkie.

''Where does she find them?'' whispers the snob of the group, Italian magazine publisher Massimo Gargia. ''There's nobody that anybody knows. No-bod-eee.'' (And this from a man whose B-list glossy, *The Best in the World*, is known as ''The Worst'' among the smart set.)

Actually, two of Ivana's fellow travelers have become gossip-column fodder lately. Her best friend in Europe, the much-married Eva Maria O'Neill, caught the eye of the press when she caught the eye of Prince Charles at a polo match in Vero Beach, Florida, two seasons back. And Ivana's constant companion of the last several months, a hitherto obscure Italian businessman named Riccardo Mazzucchelli, is be-

coming a bit more famous every day he spends by her side.

In any case, Ivana's friends are not there for their social luster or their publicity value. They're there mostly for business reasons, or to promote Ivana. Massimo Gargia put Ivana on his annual "The Best" list last year (along with ex-queen Soraya of Iran and Rolling Stone Bill Wyman). The London P.R. whiz has arranged for *Hello!* magazine to photograph Ivana as queen of the opera ball. Ivana designed bed linens for the Plaza hotel with the Milan sheet man. The charter-airline king flew Ivana to Prague on his private jet, from Saint-Moritz, where she is renting a chalet from the Zurich plastic surgeon for the month of February. The Queens water-supply magnate rents Riccardo Mazzucchelli's town house in London. Even Riccardo's relationship with Ivana started out with business in mind. Eva O'Neill introduced them last June in London, because Mazzucchelli's construction company has been trying to make government contacts in Czechoslovakia and, says Eva, "I knew Ivana knew President Havel well." (In June 1990, Ivana hosted a small fund-raiser at the Plaza hotel for Olga Havel's foundation for the handicapped.)

"Drink up, kids," Ivana orders cheerfully as her private trio segues from "Santa Lucia" to "O Sole Mio," both requests of her ebullient guests. "It's the Czech group, but we are losing out to the Italian contingency," she jokes in an Iron Curtain accent that rivals Zsa Zsa Gabor's. When the accordionist slides back into "Roll out the barrel," it's time to go to the ball.

At the Smetana Theatre, as the opera house is officially called, Ivana's fairy-tale homecoming suddenly collides with reality. Some three hundred out-of-control "anarchist" demonstrators, protesting the revival of elitism, are pelting arriving ballgoers with rotten tomatoes, oranges, and eggs. "Gestapo! Gestapo!" they chant as the Prague police half-heartedly try to push them back across Wenceslas Square. When a furious young man in a black leather jacket spits on the window of Ivana's Mercedes van, Mrs. Drgáč directs the driver around the block, where two rows of Pinkerton guards in full riot gear clear a path to the Smetana's back door.

Ivana deals with this unexpected indignity in exactly the same way she publicly handled the realization that the husband she once considered her Prince Charming had turned into a toad: she plasters on a big smile and steps right up to the waiting cameras. She also makes another move, not intended for public consumption. In one smooth, swift, instinctive gesture, she slips her earrings off her ears and hides them under her cape. It's also touching in its futility, because her earrings aren't real.

There are about a dozen paparazzi and three TV crews, and Ivana, smiling, has them all to herself. Or, rather, she and Riccardo Mazzucchelli, smiling beside her, have them all to themselves. The ball is a celebrity Sahara. Princess Gloria von Thurn und Taxis, Princess Ira von Fürstenberg, and Eliette von Karajan, who have been promised by a committee member, don't show. Neither does Peter Ustinov, and nobody seems to know where—or who—the Bourbon-Parma princess is. There is not a single ambassador in attendance, not even America's Shirley Temple Black. The biggest disappointment is the absence of Ivana's "friend" Václav Havel, presumably because he doesn't want to lose the "anarchist" vote in the upcoming elections. But Ivana keeps smiling bravely. So does Riccardo.

She sits in her gilded red-plush rococo box, sipping champagne, smiling through the speeches, the symphony, the opera, the ballet, the folkloric dances. She smiles on the pay-as-you-go buffet line. She smiles at the cash bar. At midnight, the biggest name on the program, Karel Gott, the Barry Manilow of Mitteleuropa, comes on—and Ivana's smile stretches to the limit.

"Oh, it's fabulous," she explains. "The man who is singing used to be one of my best friends twenty-five years ago. I was engaged to guy who wrote all the lyrics for Karel Gott songs. Poet. He died in car accident. So it brings back all the memories of my youth." The smile is cracking ever so slightly, but the belle of the ball takes another sip of champagne and goes off to waltz with her beaming beau. Karel Gott is crooning, "I'm yours, be mine."

This is not a woman who gives up on fairy tales easily.

Of course, the last two years have not exactly been a fairy tale for Ivana Trump. Has any wife ever been so publicly humiliated? Will anyone ever forget Marla Maples's BEST SEX I'VE EVER HAD headline? What was it like to *read* her husband's reaction to the full-face-and-body makeover she underwent in a poignant attempt to keep his interest: "Who would touch those plastic breasts?"

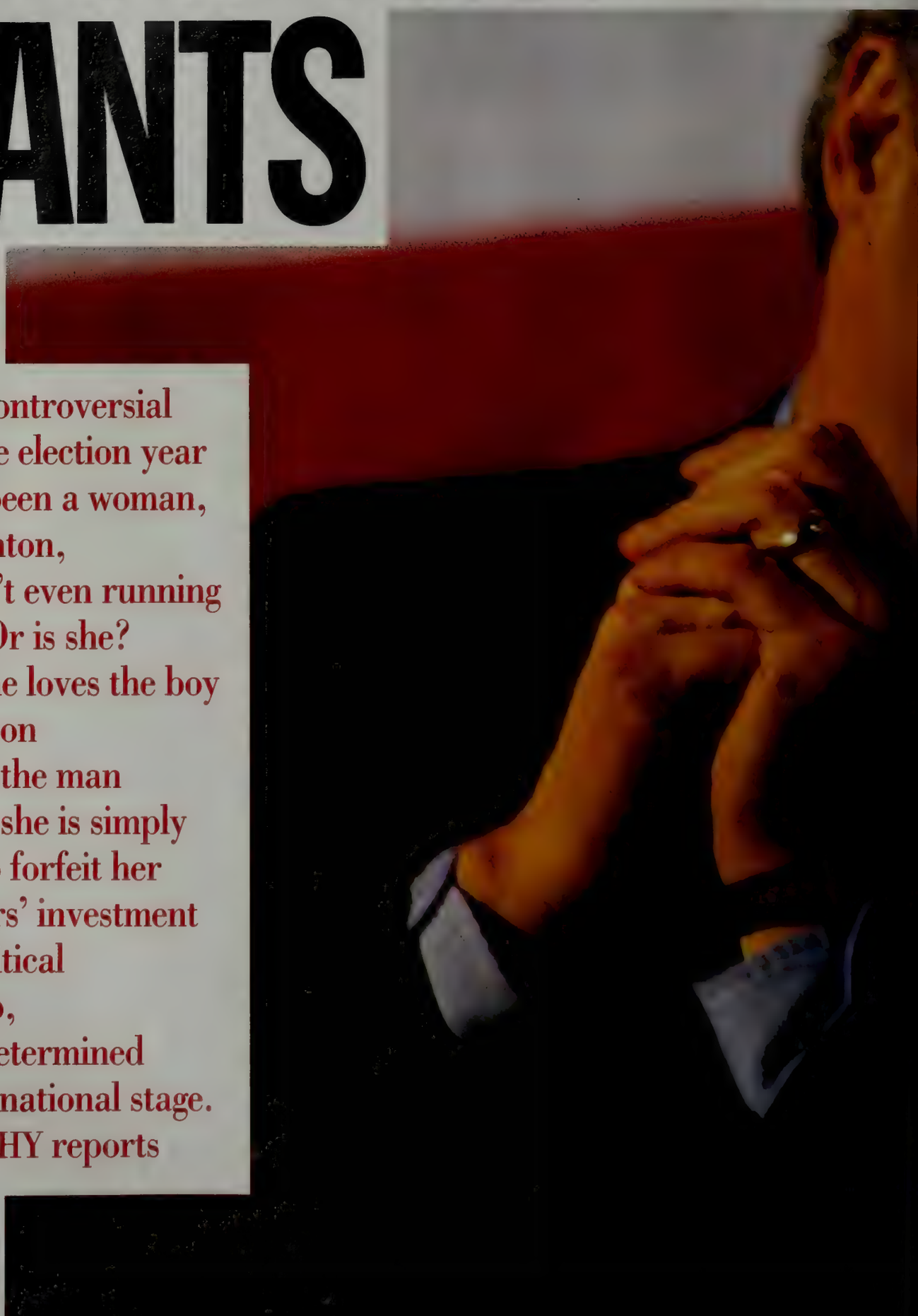
In a matter of months, Ivana lost her husband, her job, and the only man she ever really trusted, her father, who died of a heart attack, at age sixty-three, in October 1990. And though she was granted a divorce on grounds of "cruel and inhuman treatment" well over a year ago, and the bitter thirteen-month legal battle over her financial settlement was resolved *(Continued on page 178)*



THE TRUMPETTE
Ivana as a brunette, modeling in Prague, 1970; *below*, on the runway with Thierry Mugler at his Paris ready-to-wear show, October 1991; *opposite page*, the new Ivana.


When
Ivana became the
spokesperson
for Roederer Cristal,
one society snoot
quipped,
"I guess that means
we'll all be
switching to Krug."

WHAT HILLARY WANTS



The most controversial figure of the election year so far has been a woman, Hillary Clinton, and she isn't even running for office. Or is she? Whether she loves the boy in Bill Clinton as much as the man or whether she is simply unwilling to forfeit her sixteen years' investment in their political partnership, Hillary is determined to seize the national stage. GAIL SHEEHY reports

IRA WYMAN



POWER SURGE
Bill and Hillary Clinton share the spotlight.

In May of 1990, Bill Clinton was running for his fifth term as governor of Arkansas. While he was conveniently out of town, a challenger in the Democratic primary, Tom McCrae, called a press conference in the echo chamber of the capitol rotunda. He was in the middle of telling everyone who would listen that Bill Clinton was a chicken—"and since the governor will not debate..."—when all at once another voice chewed into his sound bite. "Tom, who was the one person who didn't show up in Springdale? *Give me a break!* I mean, I think that we oughta get the record straight..."

The camera swung around to a small, yellow-haired woman in a houndstooth-check suit—literally *in his face*. Having crashed McCrae's photo op, she planted herself directly opposite him, just spoiling for a fight. She looked quite pale without studio makeup, but her eyes flashed in the lights of the television camera. "Many of the reports you issued," she charged, "not only praised the governor on his environmental record, but his education record *and* his economic record!"

The camera spun again to reveal the hapless man's grit-eating smile, his eyes bobbling around in his head as if he'd just been zapped by a stun gun. His stammering response was trampled by the woman ticking off her points, reading embarrassing passages from the candidate's own earlier handouts. "You now turn around and as a candidate have a very short memory," she finished. As they say in Arkansas, *she ate his lunch.*

The Eyewitness News man wound up his thrilled coverage with the tag line "Hillary Clinton showed again that she may be the best debater in the family."

It is the Year of the Political Woman. Paul Tsongas, whose least appealing quality was his mopey personality, said with a grateful nod to his attorney wife, Niki, "If you don't have charisma, you marry it." Ruth Harkin, a former prosecutor, assumed the role of her husband's unofficial political adviser for his six-month run. Marilyn Quayle, who told *The Washington Post* through clenched teeth that politicians in the past never acknowledged that "your little wifey...helps you," commands entry into the Office of the Vice President from a six-office suite across the hall, passing judgment on lobbyists and other supplicants. (Marilyn says she raises a subject with the vice president "if I think it's important enough." Otherwise, staffers "let me make the decision instead.") President Bush, who often leans on his vastly more popular wife at public appearances, has recently brought on board his rudderless re-election team wordsmith Peggy Noonan.



RULES OF ATTRACTION
"I loved being with her," says Bill, "but I had very ambivalent feelings about getting involved with her."

Her job description: "Message development." Even bullyboy Pat Buchanan, Beltway pundits say, wouldn't have run if it hadn't been for his sister—who is also his campaign chairwoman.

And it is Hillary Rodham Clinton, lawyer–activist–teacher–author–corporate boardwoman–mother and wife of Billsomething, who is the diesel engine powering the front-running Democratic campaign. In the space of one week in late January, Hillary fast-forwarded from being introduced as "wife of" (*60 Minutes*) to the victim of "the other woman" (*PrimeTime Live*) to "Trapped in a Spotlight, Hillary Clinton Uses It" (*The New York Times*), the last illustrated by a picture which said it all: Hillary with her arm thrust in the air and wearing a big campaign smile, out in front of her husband.

The forty-four-year-old wife and mother still shows flashes of the sweet ingenue smile of her college years, and has maintained her size 8 by touching little more than a lettuce leaf and water during campaign fund-raisers (her less disciplined husband has put on twenty-five pounds). When the cameras dolly in, however, one can detect the calculation in the f-stop click of Hillary's eyes. Lips pulled back over her slightly jutting teeth, the public smile is practiced; the small frown establishes an air of superiority; her hair looks lifelessly doll-like.

But there is no mistaking the passion in her words or the impact of her presence. "The *instant* she came in the door of the ballroom, I knew it," said a savvy pol, Patricia Derian, an assistant secretary of state under Jimmy Carter, who saw Hillary sway a big-ticket Washington crowd at a benefit in March. There was no fanfare, no spotlight, the lady isn't even much taller than a podium microphone. "But there was no missing her," said Derian, "and that's really rare. She's a spectacular candidate in her own right. She's got my vote."

In Los Angeles, at a March 26 salmon-and-spinach luncheon hosted by Hollywood producer Dawn Steel and television producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason (among others), Hillary dazzled an audience that is usually ho-hum about stars and plenty impressed with themselves. "We need to be against brain-dead politics wherever we find it!" she thundered, looking fierce in a fire-engine-red suit. "We need to forge a new consensus about [our] new political direction...that doesn't jerk us to the right, jerk us to the left, prey on our emotions, engender paranoia and insecurity...but instead moves us forward together." Producer Sherry Lansing pronounced it "an extraordinary speech, *extraordinary*."

The sold-out luncheon—her most successful of the season, raising $50,000—came off in the heat of the controversy over Hillary's role in her husband's campaign. Her snappish response to Jerry Brown's broadside on her career—"I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas"—had offended millions of wom-

en who have chosen to be full-time homemakers, reinvoking the arrogance of the Tammy Wynette quote that so irritated the country-music vote. That very morning, *New York Times* columnist William Safire had written about what he called "the Hillary problem," describing her as a "political bumbler" who suffers from "foot-in-mouth disease."

In a private interview after the luncheon, I asked Hillary how she felt about being labeled "the problem." Uncharacteristically, she squirmed and stammered. "I don't know how to feel about it. . . . I think I'll just have to be more . . . *careful* in the way I express my feelings, so I don't inadvertently hurt anybody.

"I think the only legitimate concern is around the misconstruction of what I said about baking cookies and having tea. I can understand why some people thought that I was criticizing women who made different choices than the one I had—in fact, criticizing the choice that my mother and a lot of dear friends have made. Nothing could be further from what I believe."

Did she, then, agree with Barbara Bush, who stirred up a hornet's nest at Hillary's alma mater, Wellesley College, when she told students that a working mother should always put family before career? "For *me*, I believe that," Hillary replied fervently. "*Personally*, I believe that a woman should put her family and her relationships—which are really at the root of who you are and how you relate to the world—at the top of your priority list." She hastened to add, "But I don't believe that I, or Barbara Bush, should tell all women that's what *they* have to put first. . . . What we have to get away from is the idea that there's only one right choice."

Hillary seems to understand why she has become a lightning rod in her husband's presidential campaign. "What they're trying to figure out is 'How will she be able to influence him? Who is this person?' Well, Bill Clinton is the kind of person who asks advice from literally dozens of people. If you look at George Bush, he's advised by a coterie of men . . . who are, frankly, all of one mind, a very narrow, all-white coterie of, exclusively, men."

The president is one of Hillary's favorite targets, and she pillories him mercilessly in her speeches. "When it's all stripped away," she told the L.A. crowd, "at bottom what we see is a failure of leadership, rooted in a very hollow sense of what politics is and can be." As one listener put it, "She's unbelievably articulate and connects with her audience with a message that hits home." Then she joined the buzz heard all over the room: "You can't help but think, Why isn't *she* the candidate?"

She almost was. Two years ago, when Bill Clinton considered forgoing his fifth gubernatorial contest in order to build an early base for his lifelong presidential ambitions, Hillary called up a friend and former newspaper publisher in the state, Dorothy Stuck, and asked, "What would happen if *I* ran for governor?"

"If I get elected president," Bill Clinton vows, "it will be an unprecedented partnership."

"After all this time Bill's been in office, you'd be hung with his baggage," answered the veteran newspaperwoman. She pledged her support, but advised Hillary to wait a few more years. "She thought she had a good chance," remembers Stuck, who adds that Hillary Clinton is revered by many women in Arkansas. Hillary's closest confidante, Carolyn Huber, confirms, "She got very enthusiastic about the prospect of running for governor." Hushing her voice, as if telling a little tale out of school, Huber says, "I think she'd like to be governor, but she wasn't about to try if Bill wanted to again."

"Some say the wrong Clinton is in the statehouse," the governor himself drawled at a charity roast of Hillary four years ago, "and I wouldn't disagree with them." On February 7, when I asked if he was concerned about being upstaged by his wife, Clinton was unfazed. "I've always liked strong women. . . . It doesn't bother me for people to see her and get excited and say she could be president. I always say she could be president, too." At his own fund-raisers he has often quipped, "Buy one, get one free!"

In fact, fewer people seem to have negative feelings toward Hillary than toward her husband. According to a national survey conducted from March 27 to 29 by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman for *Vanity Fair*, 41 percent of those surveyed have a generally favorable impression of Hillary, while 24 percent have an unfavorable one. Fifty-five percent think she is an asset to her husband's campaign; 24 percent think she's a liability. A whopping 84 percent say they would not object to a First Lady with a separate career. Those surveyed use the following descriptions of Hillary: intelligent (75 percent); tough-minded (65 percent); a good role model for women (48 percent); a feminist in the best possible sense (44 percent). The negatives: power-hungry (44 percent); too intense (36 percent); a wife who dominates her husband (28 percent). Most disturbing for the Clintons, however, is the skepticism over their relationship: 53 percent think it is more a "professional arrangement" than a "real marriage" (22 percent).

The raised eyebrows are due in part to the way Hillary has seized the stage at certain public appearances. Even the normally unflappable Tom Brokaw was startled when, in the triumphal glow of the southern stomp on Super Tuesday, she shot past her husband to man the microphone. "What I would like to do, in introducing . . . *someone* . . ." she began, while her husband danced in the background like a prizefighter trying to stay warm. Soon she was booming, "We believe *passionately* in this country and we cannot stand by for ONE MORE YEAR and watch what is happening to it!" Over the applause, Brokaw observed dryly, "Not just an introduction, this is a *speech* by Mrs. Clinton."

Hillary barely referred to her hus-

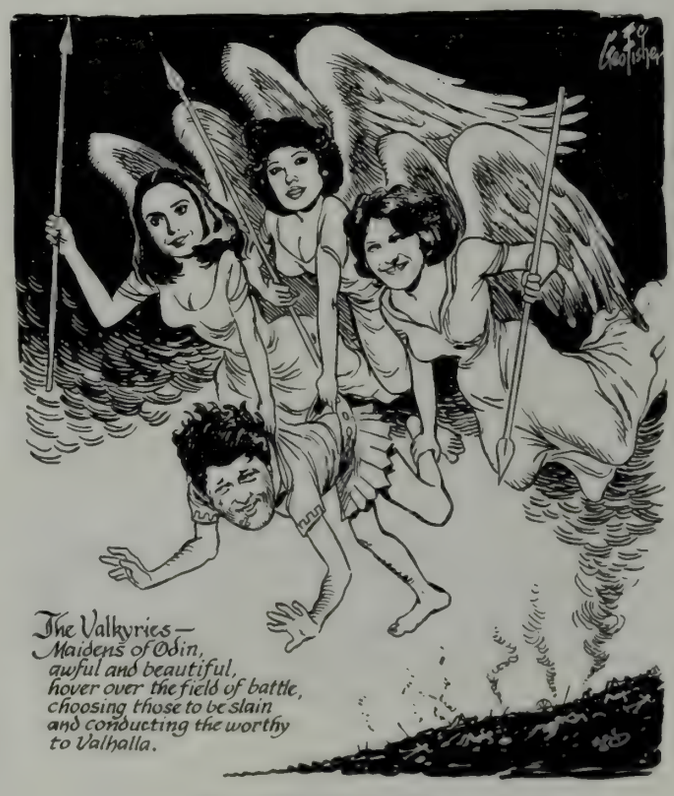
band—and then only as "the messenger." If he is the messenger, she may be the message. Those who keep asking "Why isn't *she* running?" miss the point. Hillary Clinton *is* running. She and her husband have been a political team for more than twenty years. And now they are, despite protestations to the contrary, *co-candidates* for president of the United States. Asked at the L.A. luncheon if she wanted to be her husband's vice president, Hillary brushed off the question. "I'm not interested in attending a lot of funerals around the world," she cracked. She got a laugh, but when she continued it was with serious intent. "I want maneuverability . . . I want to get deeply involved in solving problems." She later told me that she doesn't see herself as a Cabinet officer but as an all-around adviser. And she doesn't see what all the fuss is about. "No one gives George Bush a hard time when he gets advice from Jim Baker," she'd complained to me earlier in the campaign.

Before he was forced to retreat on the subject of Hillary's possible role in a Clinton administration on NBC's *Meet the Press,* Bill told me, "If I get elected president, it will be an unprecedented partnership, far more than Franklin Roosevelt and Eleanor. They were two great people, but on different tracks. If I get elected, we'll do things together like we always have."

Which would make Hillary Clinton one of the most formidable women in the world, a model of a full partner in public life. Friends go even further, touting Hillary as the next attorney general by pointing out that she would be better qualified than Robert Kennedy was when his brother named him to the post. Hillary's own brother Hugh Rodham, a public defender in Dade County, Florida, foresees even higher callings. "Attorney general is only local lawmaking," he says dismissively. "There's treaty negotiations she could do. There's labor stuff. There's secretary of state . . ."

The Clinton camp had planned "a slow build for Hillary," according to her campaign manager, Richard Mintz. That was until all hell broke loose—until the day Bill Clinton was "deflowered" by a cabaret singer who once headlined at the Pinnacle Lounge in Little Rock.

The candidate's strategists huddled in panicky planning sessions. One significant piece of information: polls showed that 39 percent of voters would have reservations about voting for a candidate who had been unfaithful—but that the number diminishes if the wife knows about it and accepts it. The clear conclusion was that Gennifer's unforgettable slot-machine eyes and hydraulic lips and indelible black roots required an immediate visual challenge: the apple-cheeked, moon-eyed wife of the governor, staggeringly poised, effortlessly articulate, primly silk-scarved. Blonde too—in fact, Hillary looked like a *Town & Country* version of Gennifer Flowers, but not with a *G,* with a good little Wellesley girl's hair band covering her brown roots.



SAVING GRACES
In an unpublished mid-eighties cartoon,
Bill Clinton is rescued by
three female guardians: Hillary, press secretary Joan Roberts,
and chief of staff Betsey Wright.

"It's hurting so bad," Hillary said. "The press doesn't believe you have any feelings."

Hillary rendezvoused with Bill in Boston the night before the Clintons' extraordinary "Checkers speech" on *60 Minutes.* She conferred with the television crew on colors and camera angles. "You can quote me as saying that my sense of it was that she was in control," says Steve Kroft, the interviewer. "We fiddled around with who should sit on which side, and they fiddled around with chair heights and things like that. You didn't know she was his wife, you'd have thought she was a media consultant. She didn't do it in a dictatorial sort of way. . . . She was very delightful and charming. When they left the room, everybody pretty much said, 'Boy, she's terrific.' "

The next day, before airtime, tension was reportedly running high in the control room, with producer Don Hewitt ranting to Clinton advisers George Stephanopoulos and Harold Ickes, "He's gotta come clean! He's got to say yes!" Once Bill and Hillary were seated, Mrs. Clinton stared intently at Bill as he responded to the grilling. This was no Nancy Reagan glaze—this was the look of the *consigliere* sitting vigil over a member of the family.

Kroft's impression was that Hillary was "tougher and more disciplined than he is. And analytical. Among his faults, he has a tendency not to think of the consequences of the things he says. I think she knows. She's got a ten-second delay. If something comes to her mind she doesn't



STATE OF THE UNION
The Clintons enjoy breakfast in the Arkansas governor's mansion the morning after his first inauguration.

think will play right, she cuts it off before anybody knows she's thinking it."

"I have acknowledged wrongdoing," Bill offered when the cameras were rolling. "I have acknowledged causing pain in my marriage." At another point when Kroft pressed him—"I am assuming from your answer that you're categorically denying that you ever had an affair with Gennifer Flowers"—he took the bait. "I've said that before," he replied quickly. "And so has she. . . ."

In jumped Hillary the litigator: "I don't want to be any more specific. I don't think being any more specific about what's happened in the privacy of our life together is relevant to anybody besides us."

It was a signal for her husband to button up. "Having made the mistake of denying Gennifer Flowers, he was undoing what they had decided to do," explains senior campaign adviser Susan Thomases. "So she was reminding him, 'Hey, buddy, remember our strategy: if you say you're not going to talk about *any* specific case, and then you talk about one case, you're blowing the strategy.' "

Hillary's presence was so strong, in fact, that, according to Kroft, "we found ourselves rationing her sound bites to keep her from becoming the dominant force in the interview."

But some people think it has become obvious that Hillary is the dominant force in the Clinton campaign. Even those awed by her commented after her Super Tuesday speech, "There's something a little scary, a little Al Haig–ish about her." Her closest counterparts, high-striving professional women, often react viscerally: she's "too intense," they say, or she's "missing something feminine"—as if they can't forgive her for appearing to have it all.

The slings and arrows never seem to pierce Hillary's armor-plated determination. "Hillary is convinced the way she does things is the right way," attests her brother Hugh. Carolyn Huber, the woman who may know her best, having served as Hillary's "mansion administrator," day-to-day logistical helper, and surrogate grandmother to her child, affirms that Hillary will simply not be deterred. "She wants to win as bad as he does." Is she tougher than he is? "I think so," laughs Huber. "She's more clear about what she wants and the way she wants it done. I don't think there's ever been a time when Hillary set her mind to something she wanted to happen that it hasn't happened."

Hillary is widely regarded by their closest associates as the tougher, cooler, and more intellectually tart of the two. Her favorite recreation is standing with friends and talking ideas around the kitchen counter in the governor's mansion, one long *Big Chill* party, people helping themselves out of the fridge. (Hillary rarely cooks, and the state dining room is scarcely used.) She might mimic one of her hillbilly witnesses spitting tobacco from the stand while she cross-examines him. Or she'll burst into a high-pitched Ozark honk—hee hee hee—over one of her husband's Bubba lines. But come 10:30 she'll announce, "That's it for me, I'm goin' to bed." Bill is the night owl, the eternal schmoozer; Hillary is the emotionally disciplined one.

Sometimes this causes dissonance. "Hillary's hard to know," concedes a close family friend, Carolyn Y. Staley.

Another family friend, assured she wouldn't be identified, is more candid: "I never know from one day to the next how I'm going to be received by Hillary. She's very busy, she knows exactly where she wants to go and how to get there. You're either useful or extraneous to her." Finally she blurts, "Look, Hillary's tough as nails. *Bill has always deferred to women to fight his battles.*"

Indeed, throughout his career Bill Clinton has surrounded himself with exceptionally strong-willed, capable women. Following his first and only loss as governor, he drafted the rough-and-tumble George McGovern operative Betsey Wright as his campaign manager; she devoted the next ten years of her life to protecting and re-electing him. (Wright, who quit as Arkansas Democratic Party chair just before Clinton announced, says that she was "fried" by the time this presidential race came around.) He persuaded the flinty Susan Thomases, who had cut her teeth on Bill Bradley's first Senate campaign, to join his current brain trust. And his top staff in the Arkansas statehouse has been predominantly female. "The only two men I know in American politics who are capable of treating women as real equals," says Thomases, "are Bill Bradley and Bill Clinton."

Part of Clinton's dependence on his wife is financial. As one of the chief litigating partners in the Rose Law Firm and a director on five corporate boards (including a position as the only woman on the board of Wal-Mart) Hillary earned—based on her own figures—an estimated $160,000 in 1990. Twice voted one of the hundred most influential lawyers in America by *The National Law Journal*, "she could command the top salary for a litigator in any law firm in New York or Los Angeles," claims her partner Herb Rule. (The going rate is $500,000 and up.) Instead, she has committed much of her energy to pro bono work, such as chairing the Children's Defense Fund, and serving on the boards of nearly a dozen other educational and social-justice organizations.

"If Hillary were doing what she most wanted to do in this world, she would not be a partner in a corporate law firm," confides her close friend and former Wellesley dormmate Jan Piercey. "That's what she's had to do—she's responsible for the revenue in the family." (Bill has increased his salary from $25,000 at the age of twenty-nine to the princely sum of $35,000 almost twenty years later.)

Bill Clinton is the *puer aeternus*, suggests one of their older, wiser friends—the eternal boy, a Jungian archetype, who remains stuck in an adolescent orientation toward life, often prompted by an exaggerated dependence on his mother. Seductive to men as well as women, the prototypical eternal boy often hopes to redeem mankind; in the archetype he is meant to replace the old king as a symbol of the renewal of life. But the "winged youth" often falls, psychologically, and in crisis turns to strong female figures to raise him up again. "Bill has achieved enormous success, but he's still reaching," says an Arkansas friend. "It's the young man who's been a star and who is, I hope, not locked in adolescence. We don't know that yet—he's only forty-five."

"The mutual admiration that creates the closeness in their marriage also produced difficulties."

George Fisher cartooned Bill Clinton in the guise of a boy for fourteen years at the old *Arkansas Gazette*, starting him off in his first term in a baby buggy, later graduating him to a tricycle and a ten-speed bike. (In real life Bill Clinton plays with a '64 Mustang—Hillary calls it his "boy's toy.") In the mid-eighties Fisher penned a striking drawing that captures Bill Clinton's dependence on his delivering angels. The cartoon, which was never published, shows three winged, spear-carrying women—Hillary, Betsey, and Clinton's former press secretary—lifting their barefoot boy from the battlefield. They are meant to be Valkyries, "awful and beautiful," who gather up the worthy and fly them to Valhalla.

I saw Fisher's cartoon come to life during what the campaign calls "the incredible week" after the *60 Minutes* appearance, a week I referred to once as a "crisis" only to have Hillary correct me: "This is not a crisis, not a *personal* crisis anyway." Flying with her, knee-to-knee, I watched while she fashioned the strategy to bring her husband "back from the dead," as he now describes it.

It was in a nondescript motel in Pierre, South Dakota, where she had twenty minutes of downtime, that Hillary flipped on the TV on Monday, January 27, and caught the end of Gennifer Flowers on CNN playing tapes of her phone conversations with the governor. They were devastating.

"Let's get Bill on the phone," Hillary coolly directed her campaign manager, Mintz, who was himself fighting back tears. According to Hillary, Clinton told his wife he wasn't concerned—after all, who was going to believe this woman? "Everybody knows you can be paid to do anything," the governor said.

"Everybody *doesn't* know that," she insisted. "Bill, people who don't know you are going to say, 'Why were you even talking to this person?' "

At 6:25 P.M. Central time, Hillary was pressing the flesh at a Pork Producers Rib Feed in Pierre when her campaign manager whispered in her ear, "All three nets led with the Flowers press conference." She excused herself and made a beeline for the one pay phone in the hall, pursued by a camera

crew from *PrimeTime Live*. Mintz appealed to them not to shoot her. "I promise I'll give you a shot of her on the phone, but this is not the time."

I watched as a terrible shrug went down Hillary's face. Little Rock was telling her about the latest deal—a young woman had been offered half a million dollars to say she'd had a one-night stand with Bill Clinton. Where would it stop?

Back in her six-seat charter plane, Hillary vented her frustration above the grinding hum: "If we'd been in front of a jury I'd say, 'Miss Flowers, isn't it true you were asked this by A.P. in June of 1990 and you said no? Weren't you asked by the *Arkansas Democrat* and you said no?' I mean, *I would crucify her*."

Hillary boils over at what she perceives as a double standard—that the press has shied away from investigating long-standing rumors about George Bush. "I had tea with Anne Cox Chambers [the heiress who is chairwoman of her media empire's Atlanta newspaper group]," Hillary recalled to me in a later interview, "and she's sittin' there in her sun-room saying, 'You know, I just don't understand why they think they can get away with this—everybody knows about George Bush,' and then launches into this long description of, you know, Bush and his carrying on, all of which is apparently well known in Washington. But I'm convinced part of it is that the Establishment—regardless of party—sticks together. They're gonna circle the wagons on Jennifer ——— and all these other people." (Anne Cox Chambers remembers telling Hillary, "I don't understand why nothing's ever been said about a George Bush girlfriend—I understand he has a Jennifer, too.")

The reference is to a decade-long Bush staffer who now enjoys a senior State Department position. She has been persistently linked with the president in rumors that have never been proved. When I interviewed her in 1987 in Bush's Senate office, the amply built middle-aged woman, a born-again Christian, was discreet about her work and travel with Bush. (In June of 1987, George Bush Jr. told *Newsweek* that when he asked his father if he'd ever committed adultery he replied, "The answer to the Big A question is N.O.")

On the tiny plane, Hillary focused on the problem at hand. "I'm just not going to sit by anymore and say, 'Well, it's the press's responsibility.' If we can destroy people with paid stories, what's next? . . . I don't think Bill appreciates how TV really doesn't give the other side. It's like negative advertising." A light bulb switched on behind her eyes. "*That's* what I should have told him. In 1980 the Republicans started the negative advertising; in 1992 we have paid political character assassination. What Bill doesn't understand is you've *gotta* do the same thing in response as you do with negative advertising—Dukakis didn't understand that." Suddenly, a brainstorm. "This is the daughter of Willie Horton!" Now she had the outlines of a proactive, not reactive, strategy: pound the "Republican attack machine" and run against the press.

Just before landing, she recited a prayer she says often: *Dear Lord, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small.* Thump, bump, the plane skated through the blackness toward a shack with the sign RAPID CITY. Within minutes, Hillary was clicking across the *(Continued on page 212)*



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SPOTLIGHT

Pas de Deux



DARCI KISTLER AND PETER MARTINS

The prelude to a kiss for Kistler lasted not a century, but a mere decade.

Darci Kistler, New York City Ballet's reigning ballerina, first got to know Peter Martins when she was sixteen years old, the age of Princess Aurora, the heroine of *The Sleeping Beauty*, who pricks her finger on a spindle and falls into a deep sleep for a hundred years. At the time, Kistler had been anointed by Balanchine as a latter-day baby ballerina, and danced his most important ballets until she fractured her ankle in 1982. She returned in 1985, but recovery was slow. Like Princess Aurora, the role she danced last spring in Martins's triumphant NYCB production of *The Sleeping Beauty*, Kistler seemed as if she were destined to languish in a netherworld.

But the spell is broken. Today, Kistler sweeps through the fabled NYCB repertory, projecting ineffable joy and mesmerizing audiences with a drop-dead glamour. And she's been luckier than her mythical counterpart. The prelude to the kiss for Kistler lasted a mere decade. Her prince, NYCB chief Martins, forty-five, came back into her love life last year; he married Kistler at Christmastime in Denmark. "It was a low-key ceremony," says Martins, "attended by what I call my Danish people, and my mother, who's eighty-three."

Martins is often dogged by comparisons to Balanchine, his NYCB predecessor, and his recent marriage suggests a few parallels. Balanchine said there were no mothers-in-law in ballet, but, as he well knew, there were wives. He had four, and they were his muses. But Martins balks at the idea that *his* marriage has anything to do with ballet. "Work is work," he says. "You can't help but prefer some dancers over others. But I really don't say this or that person inspires me to reach new highs or"—he laughs—"new lows. Darci is Darci on her own. I've known her for ten years, but, believe me, I've had nothing to do with creating her."

—LARRY KAPLAN



Photograph by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ • Styled by MARINA SCHIANO

A New Jay Dawning

What do you do after eight years of being fêted in the fast lane (and kicked around by the critics) for the phenomenal success of one novel that marks you as everything that was right and wrong with the New York eighties *Zeitgeist*? If you're Jay McInerney, you head for a new life with a new wife and put the past into a new novel, *Brightness Falls*—which, as MICHAEL SHNAYERSON reports, may be his best work yet

Jay McInerney, the most celebrated writer under forty in America and the most resented, gives his horse a kick and heads off into the woods at a gallop. We are far from any New York nightclub here. We are deep in the forested hills that circle Nashville, smack-dab in the middle of the New Jay McInerney Life. Later, perhaps, we'll do some quail hunting, then sit around the fire at home while Mildred cooks up some fried chicken and turnip greens. For all this, we can thank the blonde at McInerney's side, the beautiful and very spunky Helen Bransford, whose world this is and who, to the dazzlement of her friends and his, married McInerney, thirty-seven, six years her junior, after a whirlwind courtship of barely a month. For McInerney, who still gets lost driving to get the milk, this is a new life all right, and to cap it off he has a fiercely ambi-

The literary prince of the party.

Photographs by GEORGE LANGE





McInerney with his new bride, jeweler Helen Bransford, at their home in Nashville. *Below*, nightclubbing with former bad boys Gary Fisketjon and Morgan Entrekin in 1986.



PATRICK McMULLAN

Impetuous, even reckless, McInerney has often seemed to *court* drama, not only in his work but in his life.

tious new novel, a sort of *Bonfire of the Vanities* with heart: *Brightness Falls* (Knopf).

There's a bit of wry wordplay, of course, in the title. Eight years later, McInerney is still the one who wrote *that* book, *Bright Lights, Big City*, the slim, phenomenally successful coming-of-age-in-New-York novel that seemed to freeze-frame the *Zeitgeist* in that moment after disco and before the spread of AIDS, when cocaine was nose candy and the hardest life choice was Area or Heartbreak. Young, handsome, and ready to ride, McInerney overnight became the literary prince of the party—any party—flanked by his long-locked knights, editors Gary Fisketjon and Morgan Entrekin, with models and hangers-on in tow, appearing everywhere in person and in print. Though the clubs were downtown, there was something terribly prep-school about it all—here was the cool group you'd never felt a part of, haunting you again—which soon resulted in a backlash of envy. When McInerney's next two novels came in equally slim but slight, the same literati who'd raised him up took great delight in tearing him down: the old one-two of American letters, its cruelest blows reserved for those who don black-tie instead of tweed and make the grave mistake of basking in their fame. "I can understand how people got sick and tired of all this," McInerney says now. "I got way too much attention."

But if there's a nod to that public slide, *Brightness Falls* is no admission of defeat. At more than four hundred pages, with dozens of characters, it leaps from the Salinger-like single voice of *Bright Lights* to a bold panorama that tries to record a whole city—New York—in the giddy, nihilistic months before the stock-market crash of 1987. Central to it is a young book editor at a major publishing house who clashes with his boss and finds himself pursuing a bizarre but timely course: a leveraged buyout of his company. Fast-paced and fun, but underscored by a brooding awareness of life's mounting losses, the novel has a make-it-or-break-it, shoot-the-moon feel to it: Take *this*, querulous critics!

The surprise is that the early word is good, even from those who've come to roll their eyes at the mention of McInerney's name. "I think the book is incredibly good, even profound," says critic James Atlas, who plowed through it in a single day. "He's captured the spirit of New York in the eighties, and the characters, though comic, are portrayed with real generosity."

The characters have certainly helped stir the buzz, for most are drawn from real-life counterparts. Russell, the novel's shaggy-haired editor, is not unlike Fisketjon, McInerney's best friend since college and editor of his four novels. Russell works, as Fisketjon once did, for an editor not unlike Jason Epstein, at a publishing house not unlike Random House. One of Russell's colleagues is a black editor not unlike Pantheon's Erroll McDonald (who formerly worked at Random with Fisketjon). One of his authors is a self-obsessed intellectual not unlike Harold Brodkey. Another writer is the longtime best friend who had a dazzling fictional debut and has been slipping since then into drugs and self-doubt. The writer, of course, is not unlike Jay McInerney.

Publishing insiders seem to be deriving deep, if somewhat inane, satisfaction from guessing who's who. For real-life counterparts, the fun is in denying their own portraits and then agreeing that others' are probably true. "I never once thought as I was reading the book, Gosh, he's using my character as a foundation," says Fisketjon solemnly. "I think a lot of people would probably suggest another guy with long blond hair as the main character." Entrekin denies that, but happily suggests there's a lot of McDonald in Washington Lee, the black editor who does as little work as he can get away with and relies for job security on the liberal guilt of his white superiors. Which, of course, McDonald denies. "Hey," he says, ever cool, "if I were uptight about that I would have fought Jay on it. But I

wasn't. Because this character is clearly, at least from what I know about myself, a fictional creation. I know people are going to read this book and think I am Washington Lee. But I know I am not that guy. That guy is dangerous!''

As for McInerney, he says he is not the novel's troubled young writer doing hard drugs on his sad way down. ''That would be incredibly wrong,'' he says in real consternation. But other characters, he admits in a reflective moment by the fire, are indeed drawn from life. ''I don't want to be an asshole and say, 'Oh no, Erroll's not in the book,' and 'No, I never even thought of Brodkey.' But none of these people is in the book 'as is.'. . . What I wanted this book to be about is marriage, friendship, work, love, and the near impossibility of balancing those things in our lives. Ultimately, the only justification for any of this is: Is it good fiction? Are people who don't know any of the real-life models going to enjoy the characters in this book? If this book is only of interest to insiders in the New York media and social worlds, then I have failed utterly and I deserve to sink into miserable obscurity.''

The hope, of course, is that *Brightness Falls* will have as broad an appeal as that other outsize fictional tribute to New York in the eighties—and then some. Like most readers, McInerney admired the dazzling prose and merciless satire of *The Bonfire of the Vanities,* but felt its characters were caricatures. ''I may regret saying it, but what was going through my head when I sat down to write this novel was: What if *Bonfire of the Vanities* had real people in it?'' At about that time, Tom Wolfe published his biting essay in *Harper's* on the failure, as he saw it, of contemporary American novelists to write the social fiction that summed up their times—perhaps, suggested Wolfe with palpable disdain, because they were too solipsistic and lazy to do the reporting. ''I must say I got a little jolt when I read that,'' says McInerney, who had already begun quizzing investment bankers on the details of takeovers. ''I said, Well, we'll just see if anyone's doing this besides *you,* Tom.''

McInerney is quick to tick off other, more literary influences: behind the public image of dissoluteness is in fact a thoughtful student of his craft, well-read and well-spoken. ''I grew up most directly under the minimalist influence: Raymond Carver, Ann Beattie, Richard Ford,'' he says. ''Which in turn had been a reaction against the metafiction of the seventies: the Barth-Coover-Hawkes-Pynchon conspiracy. Minimalism influenced me, but I became tired of it, and I guess if I had any conscious ambition in this book it was to try to wed the psychologically acute domestic fiction of minimalism with the social novels of the authors I've been reading in recent years: Balzac and Dickens, Trollope and Thackeray.''

Brightness Falls is McInerney's second attempt to strike that balance with a big book about New York; a first manuscript reached 250 pages in 1986 before its author pushed it aside in disgust. Two years later, at the lowest and most bewildering point in his life, he started all over again.

Ironically, that point came at the apogee of his literary celebrity, in the fall of 1988. Michael J. Fox had just played the McInerney character in the screen version of *Bright Lights,* after hanging out with the author for weeks to ape his every mannerism. A modest success at best, the film had nevertheless made McInerney *(Continued on page 190)*

Gotta Dance!

The flesh is glorious, to be sure—who can resist those rippling sinews?—but it's not the point. Onstage, where it counts, Gregory Hines has always been weightless, airborne, defying such prosaic notions as age and gravity to tantalize audiences with the witty elegance of his seemingly effortless art. He was tap-dancing on stages before he was three, and it was hardly surprising that the prodigy who spent his childhood backstage at the Apollo Theatre would later wow 'em on Broadway in shows like *Eubie* and *Sophisticated Ladies.*

But for the last decade Hines has been AWOL, lost to a succession of Hollywood movies—and although he held his own opposite Baryshnikov in one, others were standard action adventures that didn't even acknowledge his status as one of the greatest living masters of an endangered art form. It took the determination of his wife, Pamela Koslow, to bring him back to the musical theater this spring with *Jelly's Last Jam,* which she is co-producing with Margo Lion on Broadway.

The story of Jelly Roll Morton, a New Orleans Creole who became the self-proclaimed inventor of jazz, *Jelly's Last Jam* celebrates the composer's mythic achievements but doesn't shy away from his darker facets, either. "Bricktop once said that Jelly Roll couldn't decide whether he wanted to be a musician or a pimp," reports Hines, flashing that dazzling grin. Needless to say, the show will take full advantage of Hines's fancy footwork; it may be about a piano player, but "we use tap dancing as a metaphor for playing." In truth, Hines has never strayed far from his roots: "Whenever I go to Europe and have to fill out that landing card that asks what your occupation is, I always put down 'tap dancer.'" —LESLIE BENNETTS

Photograph by MICHEL COMTE



GREGORY HINES

Jelly's Last Jam celebrates the composer's mythic achievements.

BULL RUSH

Every week millions of devotees groove to the reactionary rock 'n' roll rant of Rush Limbaugh, talk radio's bombast king and patron saint of white male chauvinists. And his phenomenon is growing, with a book and a nightly TV show in the works. But is he just the court jester of the disaffected politically incorrect, or the secret weapon of the Republican rebellion?

PETER J. BOYER tunes in

For Peggy Noonan, the awakening came on a dinner date at Manhattan's "21." Noonan, the best-selling political-memoirist and speechwriter to troubled presidents, is experienced in power dining, but she was unprepared for what occurred that evening.

She and her escort were greeted by the maître d', the captain, and two waiters, all of whom followed the couple to their booth, intent on conversation with Noonan's date. Soon she noticed the stares of other



Photograph by JAMES HAMILTON

RUSH HOUR

When Limbaugh talks, 11.6 million people listen.



patrons and heard the furtively whispered query "That's him, who's she?" Even as Noonan pondered this circumstance, people began to approach the table, one at a time at first, then in pairs, until a small crowd had gathered. The next thing Noonan knew, she was standing in the restaurant's anteroom with a camera in her hand, snapping souvenir pictures of her date for a crowd of beaming strangers, one of whom commanded, "Take one more, honey!"

"I have gone to restaurants with a lot of famous people," Noonan says now, reflecting on that evening. "I've gone to restaurants with Dan Rather when he was No. 1, right? I've gone to restaurants with George Bush when he was running for president. And I have never, *ever* seen anybody get the response Rush Limbaugh does."

For Jack Kemp, the awakening came one Saturday night in February, at a political event in New Hampshire. As Republican strategist Ed Rollins was introducing Kemp, a sizable portion of the audience stood up and headed for the exit. Rollins, beholding the exodus as he made his introduction, could only offer weakly, "Well, Kemp, half the audience is leaving...What can I say?"

Kemp was a featured attraction at the event, the cleanup hitter in an all-star lineup of conservatives that also included Pat Buchanan, Bill Bennett, and Phil Gramm. They'd convened to raise money for the cause and to honor their champion, Ronald Reagan, on his birthday; Kemp's job was to introduce a video address by the former president.

But Kemp had the misfortune of following to the podium the man whom most of the sell-out crowd had plainly come to hear, the only nonpolitician on the marquee, and, as events proved, the one man in the place able to coax that many folks out on a cold winter's night in New Hampshire—Rush Limbaugh. A bit galling for the pols, perhaps, but they had reason to be grateful too. Before Limbaugh accepted his invitation, only three hundred tickets had been sold; when he announced he would attend, the remaining nine hundred tickets went within days, and a waiting list bulged.

That's juice, and Rush Limbaugh's 320-pound frame has a full tank of it, refilling each day when he takes to the nation's airwaves and hooks into the biggest audience in talk radio. There is no other success like Limbaugh's—11.6 million listeners every week, a historic mass following unseen in radio since the days of Amos 'n Andy and Arthur Godfrey. But describing Limbaugh as the hottest talk host on the air only hints at the phenomenon. More significant, there is nothing else like *him*. Limbaugh's performance persona is an unlikely amalgam of sober political discourse and loony comedy, hard-right in its worldview but rock 'n' roll in its rhythms.

Limbaugh looses his comic scorn upon those liberal forces whose misguided dogma corrodes, in his view, the foundations of American society—feminists ("femi-Nazis" in the Limbaugh lexicon), animal-rights activists, environmentalists (tree-hugging "wackos"), multiculturalists (whose philosophy is a "tool of revenge for the failures of this society"), gay-rights activists, liberal do-gooders ("compassion fascists"), the homeless advocacy (a "hoax"), safer-sex advocates ("the condom crowd"), Jesse Jackson ("the Revvvvvv-rund Jackson"), Mario Cuomo, Anita Hill, and Ted Kennedy. Especially Ted Kennedy. A generation of Limbaugh listeners will forever know Dion's 1960s pop anthem, "The Wanderer," as "The Philanderer," sung by a Teddy impersonator and played by Limbaugh to introduce one of his favorite bits, "The Ted Kennedy Update."

> I'm the type of guy who likes to roam around,
> I'm never in one place, I roam from town to town.
> And when I find myself falling for some girl,
> I walk right to that car of mine, I take her for a whirl,
> 'Cause I'm a Kennedy, yes, I'm Ted Kennedy,
> I sleep around, around, around, around, around.

Limbaugh takes his cue from the news, and when the subversive doings seem particularly absurd he can barely contain his wicked glee, as when he introduced a new feature one recent afternoon called "The Sexual Harassment Update," to the theme song "My Eyes Adored You." As Frankie Valli sang "Though I never laid a hand on you, my eyes adored you," Limbaugh read a story announcing a seminar on sexual harassment planned for New York's Hunter College. "There will not be any men on the panel," Limbaugh read, archly, "when keynote speaker...ANITA HILL...addresses the Coalition on Sexual Harassment's upcoming seminar...

"Now, I find this interesting: 'Women Tell the Truth: A Conference on Parity, Power, and Sexual Harassment.' Who's the keynote? A liar! Anita Hill. I wish I could go! I would like to dress up as a...you think I could pass as a woman? I could pass as a feminist woman. I'll bet you I could. Bella Abzug's cousin, long lost from Outer Mongolia, or some such thing. Just put on a hat, don't shave my legs for a couple of days—I do that, you know—wobble in there on high heels, and spy on this bunch. Ha ha ha ha ha!"

The grandiloquent czar of political incorrectness holds forth in this manner three hours a day, five days a week, and he is not just preaching to the choir. Ted Koppel is a Washington fan, if not a philosophical sympathizer, often laughing out loud as he drives to work; ditto Hollywood producer Don Simpson. "I don't know anybody out here who doesn't know who he is," Simpson says. "I mean, Rush Limbaugh! He is without a doubt the best fun to listen to from nine until twelve in L.A., because most of us are in our cars half our lives here. He says a lot of things I'd punch him out over, but his point of view about the liberals is one that most of us who are from places other than the East Coast really find very hilarious. He's one of the few guys who calls it as it is when it comes to their kind of cockeyed view of the world, their pathological victimization of everything: 'Oh, woe is me,' the poor people, and all that crap.... I'm not exaggerating, I listen to him every morning."

Even Limbaugh's political adversaries concede that he has a hot wire into the *Zeitgeist*, that his Sturm und Shtick plays to a sensibility with which other political commentators—and, for that matter, the political parties—aren't connecting.

Simpson attributes to Limbaugh "a definite hipness," a quality not readily associated with conservative Republicans, but one that helped to convince Roger Ailes, the master salesman of the Reagan right, that Limbaugh would become his next big pitch. Ailes, who orchestrated the media campaigns of Reagan and Bush, has left politics for television production, and the project now getting his full attention is a

nightly TV version of Limbaugh, set for the fall. "Not too many conservatives talk about condoms, you know, and he has a sense of humor, which people don't necessarily attribute to conservatism."

"They think that conservatives are like Barry Goldwater or southern racists or shitkickers or country-club people," says political commentator Jeff Greenfield. "The Rush Limbaugh reach is to [a new segment of conservatives]: working-class, younger, humorous. They love satire, they like rock 'n' roll music, they like Bill Bennett. It's a very different kind of group. It's generational, in part—it's post-civil-rights revolution. And Rush Limbaugh, among other things, is really funny."

That assessment is not universal. "I don't think he's funny," says Larry King, the undisputed titan of radio talk before Limbaugh came along. "Gay-bashing, bashing women, 'femi-Nazis,' bashing blacks. I don't think that's funny. If he really believes it, he's a zealot, and zealots don't last in this country. Hitler was a zealot. I don't mean to say that Rush is like Hitler," he adds quickly.

Few but the most motivated critics would lump Limbaugh in with the snarling haters on the right who have been a staple of the airwaves for generations, though Limbaugh's enormous success does seem to encourage drastic hyperbole. "I don't want to compare him to Hitler," echoes Gloria Allred, a feminist lawyer in Los Angeles, and a convinced Limbaughophobe who denounced him on a recent *60 Minutes*. "But I will say that I wish Hitler had been taken more seriously in the beginning. You know what I'm saying? I just don't think we can wait until the damage is done before we start to ask, 'How did this happen?' "

Limbaugh has heard it all before. "I think if Gloria Allred thinks, which she also said, that I should be off the air, that's one of the quintessential aspects of political correctness. 'Hey, the First Amendment's fine, as long as we control who has access to it. But, well, this guy's too dangerous.' Of course I'm dangerous to their mission. And proud to be dangerous to their mission. It's not the reason I'm on the air, though.

"My purpose is not to make America more like what I think it should be. My purpose is not to make more conservatives or register more Republicans, or to get invited to the White House for a state dinner, or any of those things. I simply want to be the best radio guy there is."

And there is only more Rush to come. In March, he started a daily five-minute commentary, broadcast nationally in the morning by many of his 464 affiliates. Simon & Schuster has paid him a six-figure advance for his "forthcoming best-seller," *The Way Things Ought to Be*.

"I am the most dangerous man in America," Limbaugh often tells his audience, "because I am right. And I am having fun doing it."

The familiar bass riff from the Pretenders' "My City Was Gone" fills the studio on the seventeenth floor of 2 Penn Plaza in midtown Manhattan, and Rush Limbaugh, tie firmly knotted and earphones in place, is ready to lead his millions into the world of "Excellence in Broadcasting." It will be a diverting journey, swerving from a Ripon Society civics lecture to dolphin imitations without even pumping the clutch.

Every broadcast is a virtuoso feat, spontaneous yet contained, a daily free-form invention starring, created, and produced by Limbaugh. Like Paul Harvey or Garrison Keillor, he intuits the medium as a stage for the theater of the mind. And, like David Letterman on TV, he milks irony from the phony decorum of the studio setting itself, noisily rattling his news clippings in front of the microphone, slapping his desk to emphasize a point, nervously drumming his fingers while constructing a thought. He is an orotund Mr. Bombast who, as befitting one who creates a new universe every day, assigns to himself a few helpful virtues:

"With talent on loan from God, the man, the legend, the way of life...executing everything I'm supposed to do, flawlessly, with half my brain tied behind my back just to make it fair...the epitome of morality and virtue, the man whom thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of American mothers hope and pray their daughters will marry—perhaps some of them harboring those hopes for themselves ...chosen by God to host the most listened-to radio talk show in the world—I am Rush Limbaugh."

> "Not too many conservatives talk about condoms, you know," says Roger Ailes. "And he has a sense of humor."

And it is a good day to be Rush Limbaugh, because the world—that other world, the real one outside of EIB—has contributed much useful material. First, there is new torment for George Bush from Patrick Buchanan, who has cattle-prodded the president a few inches farther to the right. This is good for several segments of the stern-lecture stuff, analysis of exit-poll data and the like, before moving on to some favorite targets. Multiculturalists, for example.

"As you know, the multiculturalists in America are teach-

ing young skulls full of mush''—Limbaugh's term for students—''that America is immoral and unjust because Christopher Columbus was some kind of a heathen. He was probably a racist; he was probably a sexist, probably a homophobe; he was probably a bigot. He clearly cut off the hands of Indians and did all kinds of horrible, evil stuff, and so people say, 'Columbus! White male Europeans, that's why we're having the problems we're having today!'... What have I always said multiculturalism is? It is a tool of revenge for those who have failed to assimilate in the mainstream of American society. And they're taking it out on our kids...''

Limbaugh whips out a newspaper column reporting on new speculation by historians that Columbus may not deserve credit for discovering the New World after all. It may have been Columbus's wife who told him which course to take. It is welcome speculation.

''He was gonna sail the other direction, but 'No,' his wife said, 'go that way.' And so it is his *wife*, obviously one of the pioneering feminists of America, telling her husband what to do and which way to go, who is responsible. So, we have feminists, in charge of multiculturalism, who are saying that white European males are the problem, and perhaps the first feminist in the world sent the problem here! These are the kinds of things I love stumbling across, folks, because I would love to throw this at the multiculturalists.''

He loves it so much, he performs an imaginary debate.

Limbaugh: ''Wait a second, white males are the problem?''

Multiculturalist: ''Oh yes, oh yes.''

Limbaugh: ''What would you say if I told you it was his *wife* who sent him this way?''

''Ha ha! It's *her* fault that he came here! Ha ha ha ha. Ohhh, it's fun.

''Da-da-lut da-da-lut da-da-lut da-da-lut! Trumpet fanfare! It's time for an update, and so it is Andy Williams, with a passionate vocal portrayal of our animal-rights theme song.''

The sound of Williams singing ''Born Free'' fills the studio, punctuated by bursts of automatic gunfire, exploding mortars, and the howls of shrieking animals.

''As free as the wiiiind blowwwws...''

Hoowwwwwl! Screeeeech! Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

''As free as the grass grows, born free, follow your hearrrt...''

Limbaugh joins in for the second verse, improvising his own lyrics: ''Eat beef! For beef is delicious! For beef is expensive! Rich peeeeeople love beeeeef!''

This special edition of ''The Animal-Rights Update'' is inspired by the science section of *The New York Times*, which has carried a story about, as Limbaugh puts it, ''perhaps the most intelligent being roaming the planet today, our good friend The Dolphin!''

Up comes the theme song from *Flipper*, which Limbaugh helps along with his lifelike rendition of a dolphin trill as well as running commentary:

They call him Flipper, Flipper, faster than lightning,
No one you see [''Listen to this, listen!''] is smarter than he.
[''That's key, folks, 'No one's smarter than he,' that's *key!*''']
And we know Flipper lives in a world full of wonder,
Flying there under, under the sea.

(Continued on page 204)

Binoche, by Gosh!

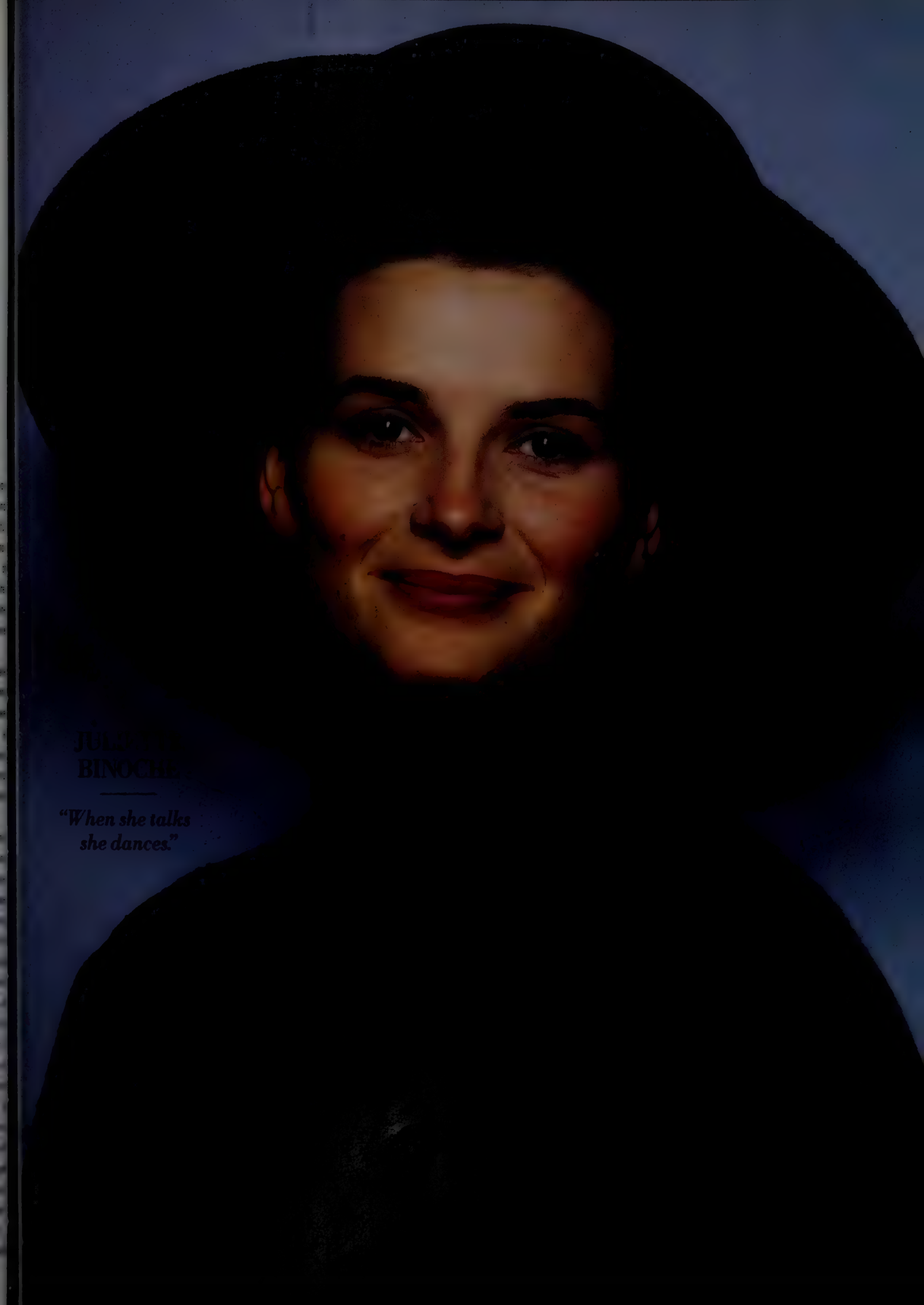
Juliette Binoche is the one they say broke Daniel Day-Lewis's heart and sparked his interest in beautiful French actresses. They appeared together in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, in which she played the young wife. Puppy-plump with insouciant lycée-student looks, she was transfixing. She has a translucent, subtle, elusive allure—more a postulant than a coquette.

The films of Léos Carax, grandson of the *nouvelle vague*, made Binoche's name in France. Until recently they also lived together. Binoche says they "complete one another," but admits it was time for a break. A Parisian friend comments, "He's very strange, this guy. Always thinking, thinking, and hardly speaking. Whereas Juliette is so cheerful, and when she talks she dances."

This year she comes into her own as an international star. "From the beginning it was obvious," says Louis Malle, who is directing her in the film of Josephine Hart's *Damage*. "She has something very special—the most stunning look that I've seen for a long, long time. It's a presence, an intensity, and it's all in the eyes." After *Damage*, she will be seen in the dual role of Cathy and her daughter in *Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights*, from Paramount. Binoche is unfazed by the controversy over the casting of a foreigner as Brontë's headstrong heroine, an icon of English lit. "People like to don't like." She has acquired a convincing London accent (authentic Yorkshire vowels were deemed "too complicated" to attempt), although her semantics remain extravagantly her own. Describing *Damage*'s Anna, who bewitches a father (Jeremy Irons) and his son (Rupert Graves), Binoche says, "She's a Giacometti sculpture. A line going to the sky. A fall of water. A mother." How she will put this across is an enigma in store.

—JULIE KAVANAGH

Photograph by NICK BRIGGS


JULIETTE
BINOCHE
"When she talks
she dances."

Carol in Wonderland

The roller-coaster life of Carol Matthau—hard-luck waif turned café-society debutante turned Hollywood wife (of Walter)—is straight out of a fairy tale. Or maybe a novel. The bewitching muse of William Saroyan, James Agee, Kenneth Tynan, and Truman Capote, who based Holly Golightly on her, she's now writing her own story in her memoirs, *Among the Porcupines*. BEN BRANTLEY reports



Carol Matthau's voice is small, feathery, and slightly bruised-sounding, suggesting a five-year-old with a three-pack-a-day habit. It was, a friend of hers assured me, "the *first* whispery beautiful voice—much nicer than Jacqueline Kennedy's." During the weeks I was doing research on her, it would resonate breathlessly on my answering machine with such messages as "Please call . . . It's . . . uh . . . well, *nothing* is important, but if there was such a thing, this would be." The wife of film star Walter Matthau—and a woman known as one of the most outspoken, and surreal-seeming, presences in Hollywood, the capital of surreal—would sound

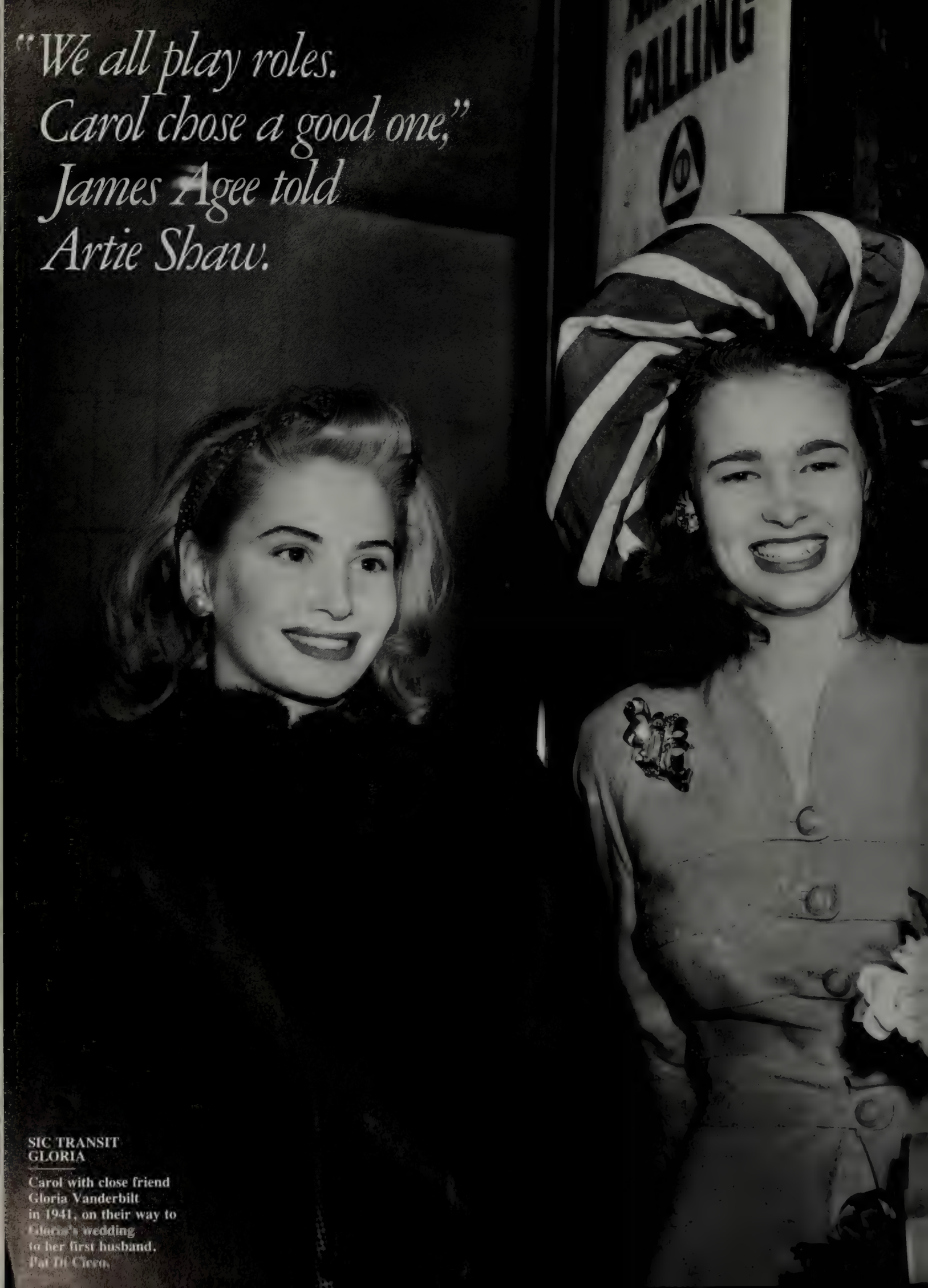
Photographs by HARRY BENSON



THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

Walter Matthau with his wife in her dressing room: "Carol always surprises me. One minute she's Marie Antoinette, and the next she's Madame Defarge, planning the revolution."

"We all play roles. Carol chose a good one," James Agee told Artie Shaw.



SIC TRANSIT GLORIA

Carol with close friend Gloria Vanderbilt in 1941, on their way to Gloria's wedding to her first husband, Pat DiCicco.

both dazed and hyperalert, like someone who hadn't slept the night before, which was usually the case. This lent a sense of wartime urgency to even our earliest telephone calls, which would spiral into free-associating monologues on everything from mortality ("I don't believe in death, you know") to lost lingerie ("There wasn't a question of alimony [from her first husband, novelist William Saroyan], but I *did* want my old brassieres back"). A few days before I left New York for Los Angeles, where we were to meet, she concluded the conversation with a perfect, curtain-raising plea.

"You won't make me sound like a fool, will you?" she said. "No, I know you won't. You're going to invent the most beautiful lies for me. You're going to make up the most wonderful person who never existed. And it's going to be a novel."

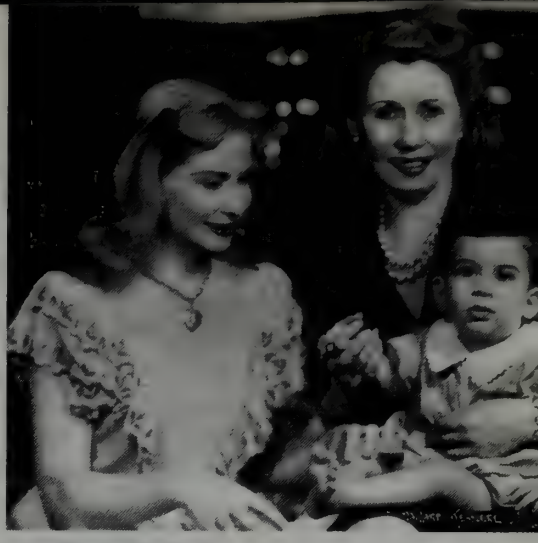
Actually, Carol Marcus Saroyan Matthau has a right to expect a novel. Before settling into a thirty-two-year marriage with Matthau, she played wife, lover, and confidante to a hallowed assortment of men of letters—Saroyan, James Agee, Kenneth Tynan, and Truman Capote. "We all play roles," the bandleader Artie Shaw remembers being told by Agee. "Carol chose a good one." So good, apparently, that it has been translated into at least a half-dozen works of fiction, each embroidering on the conceit of a dithery child-woman with a mind as sharp and prismatic as cut crystal.

From the time they first divorced (they were married twice), Saroyan couldn't *stop* writing about her, in a series of bitter domestic novels which characterized her as "something like the Match Girl dressed up and something like Queen Evil herself." Artie Shaw, in one of his early stabs at fiction, presented her, thinly disguised, as a seventeen-year-old debutante on a trip to Hollywood, "this little baby-faced chick with that innocent-looking kisser . . . making the rest of them pros look like a bunch of St. Bernards." And Capote, when he was creating *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, made a point of spending as much time as possible with the newly divorced Carol Saroyan. "You know I didn't pick you to be Holly Golightly for nothing," she remembers his saying in reference to American literature's most worldly waif. "You *are* Holly. It's just that you didn't do those rotten things that Holly did."

Friends speak of her life as if drawing from chapters in a novel. "There's a whole group of people, all over the world, whose only connection is our love for Carol," says the actress Maureen Stapleton. "You see them, and the first thing they say is 'How's Carol?' First thing." They quote her one-liners—caustic epigrams delivered with lethal little-girl sweetness—as though she were Dorothy Parker. And they speak of her unvaryingly ethereal style—pastel clothing, cheeks rouged in circles of pink, and the whitest face powder this side of a Kabuki theater—as though analyzing a painting. (Garbo, after meeting her, described her to a friend as "a delicious little albino.") "Over the years, and I've been her friend for forty of them, people have tried to imitate her," says Lillian Ross, the *New Yorker* journalist. "But she is inimitable."

The persona took shape early on. The illegitimate daughter of a beautiful sixteen-year-old French-Russian émigré named Rosheen Dorée and a father whose name she has never known, Matthau says she spent the ages two through eight in foster homes, before being reclaimed by her mother—who had by then married a wealthy Bendix Aviation executive named Charles Marcus—and introduced into Fifth Avenue splendor. "I think in that wandering through those homes, Carol somehow, somewhere, had to shelter her feelings and her sensitivities," says her younger half-sister, Elinor Pruder. "And in doing so she created this totally magic fantasy, a fairy-tale-like life, like a cocoon. She completely enveloped herself in it, and has fought all her adult life to retain that."

The conductor Leopold Stokowski,





THE TIME OF HER LIFE

From top, Carol with her mother and son Aram Saroyan in 1944; Carol and William Saroyan in 1943; Saroyan, John Fante (his witness), Carol, and Mrs. Hayes Goetz (her witness) at the hearing for their second divorce, 1952; Carol pregnant with Charlie Matthau, in Israel, 1962.





who married Matthau's best friend, Gloria Vanderbilt, gave Carol the appropriate nickname of Mélisande, after the enigmatic, melancholy young wanderer introduced to a royal court in the Maeterlinck play. More recently, Matthau tells me, when Glenn Close was considering playing Blanche DuBois, the aging, beauty-seeking fantasist of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, director Karel Reisz told her she should seek out Carol Matthau, because "that *is* Blanche DuBois."

"That really isn't a great compliment," says Matthau, her voice dropping a register. "It just isn't. How could I be? I'm the one thing Blanche was not—a survivor." That, at sixty-seven, she is one is made clear in her autobiography, *Among the Porcupines*, which Turtle Bay is bringing out this June. The curious title was inspired by a Schopenhauer parable about a group of porcupines huddling together for warmth on a freezing day while trying to avoid pricking one another with their quills. It is a metaphor for a life spent trying to find a place among the great and difficult, in a world which was never quite as pretty or reassuring as the author longed for it to be.

Among the Porcupines is Matthau's first book since *The Secret in the Daisy*, an elliptical, wistful fictionalization of her childhood, was published thirty-seven years ago under the name of Carol Grace. In the interim, she made fleeting appearances as an actress onstage and in film (most memorably as a love-wounded gangland mistress in Elaine May's *Mikey and Nicky*, in 1976), but mostly she focused on what she considers her true raison d'être—making the life of Walter Matthau, whom she married in 1959, "sing."

The memoirs were born eight years ago, while she was on location in Tunisia and the Seychelles with Walter for Roman Polanski's ill-fated swashbuckling film, *Pirates*. The heat was crippling, Walter was miserable working for the man he describes as "Hitler's surrogate," and Carol had developed a still-undiagnosed condition which was causing her to lose weight steadily and fall asleep at the dinner table. (It has been tentatively labeled "malabsorption.") "I knew I was dying," she says. "I couldn't hear music. I couldn't see anybody. I was getting cocooned into nothingness. . . . But I could write on a yellow pad—that's the one thing I could do. And I did. I wrote and I wrote and I wrote."

Some of those scribblings would find their way into *Among the Porcupines*, which she had initially planned as a series of lyric reflections on her years in California. She wrestled endlessly with her editor, Joni Evans, over the book. Matthau says she doesn't believe in autobiography—that you learn more from what a person omits than what she includes. And in her finished work she herself is tellingly scant on her seminal relationship with her beautiful, elusive mother and mute on the subject of her recent estrangement from her two children by Saroyan.

Nevertheless, the book contains enough intimate anecdotes about legendary names—Capote, Agee, Garbo, Rex Harrison and Kay Kendall, Henry Miller, Isak Dinesen, as well as her closest friends, Gloria Vanderbilt and the late Oona Chaplin—to satisfy several varieties of gossip addicts. There are even between-the-sheets confidences, such as Matthau's description of "discovering" oral sex with Bill Saroyan. But they are delivered with the wide-eyed whimsy of a self-styled Alice in Wonderland, though there's the sense that beneath the chipper caprice is an abiding current of melancholy.

Matthau says, in fact, that she is "mostly" in pain. "But, you know, one plays the game. You have to. For other people. Yeah, things haunt you, things you least expect. Maybe just a little girl I saw on a street corner in Paris—just a little girl by herself, not knowing which direction to go in."

There is no hint of somberness in the home Carol Matthau has created in the Pacific Palisades, a tidy, flower-filled suburb off Sunset Boulevard. A rambling pink hacienda-style structure, guarded by pear trees strung with tiny lights, it has interiors which bloom with all forms of roses, artificial and real—on the Colefax & Fowler wall coverings and upholstery, on the rugs, in stenciled paintings on the wooden floors. Urchin dolls, resplendently dressed, and pastoral porcelain figurines abound. It is a thoroughly feminine environment, disrupted only by the presence of an unshaven man with a corrugated face in a baseball cap who is trying to find a place among the bibelots for a plate of chicken salad.

"This is my wife's idea of a comfortable home," says Walter Matthau, the great character actor, impatiently pushing aside a plump sofa cushion. "There's never any place to put anything. All these pillows so you can't sit down. All for show, of course."

We are waiting, of course, for Carol, which will become my custom over the next several days. ("It's my worst fault," she says later. "Please don't be mad. It's just I try so hard to make myself look pretty for you.") Finally a dulcet voice ("Will you *ever* forgive me?") sounds offstage, and she enters—pastel Chanel sweater set, navy pants, waved platinum-blond hair, whitened face, blue-mascaraed eyes, and lipstick drawn into what Capote called "a flounder mouth"—looking like a winsome hybrid of Jean Harlow and Minnie Mouse.

To spend time with the Matthaus is like listening to a vaudeville version of *Beauty and the Beast*. He growls, she coos. If she's smoking when he enters the room, she shoves the ashtray and lit cigarette under the coffee table while he sniffs the air suspiciously and speaks of passively acquired cancer. He criticizes her excessive makeup; she says all she needs is a face-lift. "Walter says he's going to leave me if I get a face-lift," she informs me. "I say, 'Fine, that'll kill two birds with one stone.' " When Mary Jackson, one of the two housekeepers who have been with the couple for decades, knocks over and shatters a glass lamp in the shape of a rosebud, Walter Matthau calls out genially, "Hold for your laugh, Mary." Carol flutters over to inspect the damage: "It's all right, Mary. Nothing is forever."

Except, she might add, her passion for Walter Matthau. "I think the reason I still love him is I have no communication with him," she tells me over mini hot dogs at the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. "We never had any communication. I've always loved him for all of his maleness." The man you love, she believes, is a woman's "real mirror. You know what you are by the way a man throws you back at you."

All-consuming love is Carol Matthau's religion, a creed deeply influenced by her favorite movie, the Laurence Olivier–Merle Oberon version of *Wuthering Heights*. Accordingly, life for her has *(Continued on page 198)*



She regrets that she'll never make it to the moon, the place Truman Capote once told her she must have come from.

E ODD
UPLE

an still feel
first love."
s Carol.
Valter is the
st romantic
n."

Fine Feathered Fiend



This summer the Bat-signal will again shine like a beacon of hope over the Neo-Gothic spires and grimy steam of Gotham City. Director Tim Burton's triumph in 1989's *Batman* was to rescue the Caped Crusader from the candyland of camp and restore him as an emblem of the night. In *Batman Returns*, bon vivant millionaire Bruce Wayne (Michael Keaton) once again forsakes the comforts of stately Wayne Manor to climb fire escapes in his cape. We asked Burton if he had to psych himself to reprise *Batman*. "Yes, I did. I never wanted to do a sequel. But the script fell into place, and there were all these new characters—even weirder people than before." Clawing up a sandstorm of kitty litter is Michelle Pfeiffer's Catwoman, zipped tight in kinky vinyl. Villainwise, Jack Nicholson's Joker will be a tough act to follow. Waddling across the screen is Danny DeVito's Penguin, who's undergone a major makeover from the comic pages. "To me he was just a fat guy in a tuxedo," says Burton. Now he's a vat of evil custard with a hooknose. Casting his own strange spell is Christopher Walken as a shadowy puppeteer. None of these characters lack psychological foundation, claims Burton. "All have problems." Except perhaps for the new mayor of Gotham City, played by Michael Murphy. "He's the only normal character—he'll stick out."

We asked the director of *Beetlejuice* and these Bat-films if he ever worries about being too weird. "No. What's 'weird'?" I'll tell you what's weird. This photograph.

—JAMES WOLCOTT



DANNY DEVITO

A vat of evil custard with a hooknose.

The Virgin

With the unprecedented $1 billion sale of Virgin Records, British mogul Richard Branson said good-bye to the last major independent label in the world and the flagship company of his empire. It's been a long, strange trip for the counterculture daredevil who rose to become Maggie Thatcher's favorite entrepreneurial whiz. Now he's pitting Virgin Atlantic—and his new cash—against the giant British Airways.

FRED GOODMAN reports



PETER BROOKER

King



Branson took a flying leap with the sale of his billion-dollar baby (*inset*). "Sometimes," he says, "you've got to cash in a chip."

"He plucks what he wants out of you," says

"Have you got any money?"

Richard Branson, shoeless and bare-chested, was changing clothes in a small gray waiting room at New York's Kennedy airport on a snowy February evening. The trip from London on Virgin Atlantic Airways, the upstart airline of which he owned 90 percent, had left him parched. He wanted a soda, but like a proper monarch—presiding over a media-and-travel domain of 150 companies with a total worth of nearly $2 billion—Branson was penniless. With a change of shirt and socks, he was already traveling heavier than usual; his passport and an ever present black notebook are typically all he carries.

Branson had already put in a full day in London. Virgin Records, on the block for a gargantuan sum, was provoking fevered speculation, and his airline was embroiled in an extraordinarily acrimonious turf war with British Airways. But amid all this uproar, he was about to board a small black jet bound for Akron, Ohio, where his company was underwriting the first manned, nonstop balloon flight around the world. An inveterate daredevil himself, it was simply business as usual for Branson, a man whose chief requirements in life are met whenever a great force of will can be set against singularly bad odds.

Indeed, Branson would shortly demonstrate once again that he is that rare and captivating bird, the Guy Who Can Break Every Rule. The man who once thought nothing of conducting a formal business meeting from his bed or bathtub and who scribbled notes to himself all over his hands in ink, the man with the bird's-nest hair and mismatched socks, with an attention span so short he may never actually have finished a book—the man, also, whose unpredictability and precociousness forged the anti-empire empire.

The founder and head of Great Britain's third-largest private company is, of course, practically a national hero by now, a public-school dropout who began at age seventeen the career that would make him the country's most notable postwar entrepreneur. A few years ago an English student poll rated him the third-most-admired man in the world, behind the pope and the Prince of Wales.

Branson had set the price tag for the music company, where he earned his first fortune more than twenty years ago, at an astounding $1 billion. He was confident that he'd get his price, despite the fact that profit margins on the record company have been slim.

The only thing Branson was proved wrong about was the timing—it took him ten days longer than he expected to close the deal that sent Virgin Records into the arms of the entertainment conglomerate Thorn EMI. But when he did, on March 6, Branson completed the biggest, richest sale of an independent label in record-business history. It is the last great prize in the acquisition spree waged over the last five years by global record companies. The deal dwarfs the $540 million paid by MCA for Geffen Records in 1990—a high-water mark that seemed unmatchable to everyone. Except Branson.

"The numbers are the same as in the Geffen deal," exulted a senior member of Virgin's negotiating team. "Only substitute a pound for the dollar sign."

There has always been a cult of personality surrounding Richard Branson. "His recreation is his business," says David Tait, U.S. director of Virgin Atlantic. "There's a mix of shaman, altruist, English nose-to-the-grindstone, and optimist," says Jeff Ayeroff, co-director of Virgin's American record operation. "Richard is a charismatic; he's one of those people who draw people to them. He makes his dreams come true, so he becomes mythical."

"We were completely devoid of orthodox careerism," says Al Clark, a former longtime employee, of the culture Branson created—he named the company Virgin to emphasize its corporate naïveté. "Nobody saw themselves as climbing steps of an industry ladder—we never thought of the music industry at all. We thought about our own pleasures. People always talk about Virgin starting as a hippie hangover, but I think it had far too much vitality and cheek for that. There was just a sense of the unexpected."

The Branson myth is Virgin's single greatest asset. He doesn't tend it, exactly—at forty-one, he's famous for a seemingly total incapacity for self-reflection—yet it's constantly replenished by an energy level that shows no hint of subsiding. "He's a great achiever," says David Frost, a partner with Branson last year in a failed bid to take over ITV, Britain's independent television network. "He's tremendously persuasive and a good conceptualizer. But there's something else: there's a fun factor in dealing with Richard, which *is* important. When it comes to the life's-too-short-for-boredom syndrome, he scores high."

"He plucks what he wants out of you," says his mother. For his part, Branson recalls his parents' instilling the idea that passivity was bad, that it was better to be active every moment. Listening to music didn't qualify—hence one of the great ironies of Branson's success, that he neither cares for nor knows very much about music. "My parents brought me up with this philosophy: 'You must *do* things—you mustn't watch what other people are doing; you mustn't listen to what other people are doing,' " he once remarked.

The myth is scored as well with tales of mischief. None of Branson's employees will take his call on April Fools' Day. Last year he rigged a hot-air balloon with blinking lights to make it look like a U.F.O., put a costumed midget on board, and landed it at dawn in a field near London, astonishing carloads of commuters. Another year, his scheme was to

Branson's mother.

empty a Virgin director's home and pretend the house had been cleaned out by burglars. But the intended victim, Ken Berry, beat him to the punch: Branson was taken into custody and held in a cell overnight. Released the next morning, he was greeted outside the station by his entire staff.

He has been known as Virgin Atlantic's star cross-dresser, showing up on airplanes wearing a stewardess's uniform often enough that even he admitted he wore out the joke. When the airline debuted its London–Los Angeles route with a swimsuit fashion show, Branson had to be restrained from tripping down the aisle in a bikini.

He has a pathological addiction to competition and risk and can turn a casual Sunday tennis match into "the Olympics," says Jordan Harris, co-director of Virgin's U.S. record division. "On skiing holidays, if there's a black run and it says VERBOTEN, here we go. I remember being in Switzerland with him and skiing across this ridge and he's just knocking people off. And laughing like a little boy." In 1986, Branson set a world record for crossing the Atlantic in a small racing boat (eighty hours and thirty-one minutes)—although his first attempt had ended when his *Virgin Challenger* sank about 150 miles short of the U.K.

The daredevil stunts have generated a tremendous amount of free publicity for the Virgin companies, but, more than that, they seem to satisfy Branson's need to create events. Whether he is organizing a game of "strip cricket" during a media junket at his Oxfordshire estate or indulging his famous passion for ballooning, the goal is the same. "I don't think Richard is looking for villains in this life," says Al Clark, "but he does like to arm-wrestle. He's an unremitting competitor."

In July 1987, Branson and professional aeronaut Per Lindstrand became the first fliers to cross the Atlantic in a hot-air balloon. Although they overshot Ireland, crash-landing in the Irish Sea, the flight was a huge success: after all, several who had tried it before—in gas balloons—had been killed. Three and a half years later, Branson and Lindstrand launched a new, bigger balloon from Japan, aiming for California's Sacramento Valley. They missed by 1,800 miles.

A year and a half ago, when a banker named John Thornton sat down in Branson's living room, he put his client's reputation for high adventure and risk to yet another test. Branson had hired Thornton, an American with Goldman Sachs International in London, to take a look at Virgin's holdings. One of the things that struck him was that Branson hadn't paid much attention to the record operation for a decade. True, Branson became personally involved when Virgin recently signed the Rolling Stones and Janet Jackson, but, superstar negotiations aside, the company was essentially run by his cousin Simon Draper and Ken Berry. There was even a certain amount of resentment within the loyal ranks of the anti-bureaucracy that Branson was bored with the record business, lured away by the thrill of the fledgling and endangered airline he had founded in 1984. The fact was, the label, whose roster includes Phil Collins, Paula Abdul, Peter Gabriel, Steve Winwood, and Genesis, had grown up.



Branson, Thorn EMI chairman Colin Southgate, and Thorn EMI music president Jim Fifield after making news of the deal public.

Virgin Records had received numerous overtures in recent years, most persistently from Thorn EMI, where the head of the music division, Jim Fifield, had been on a monumental buying jag in an attempt to solidify the firm's international position. Virgin was the last big company left to acquire. Now Thornton suggested that Branson part with his flagship operation.

To his surprise, he found Branson was willing to sell—but only at his price. Keeping up with the competition in the airline business required major capital—"Sometimes," as Branson puts it, "you've got to cash in a chip." Thornton's eyes lit up, according to Branson, when he mentioned EMI: Goldman Sachs was the company's adviser, and Thornton had a good relationship with EMI chairman Colin Southgate. In early 1991, Thornton offered Southgate a clear run at Virgin Records.

Southgate's resulting offer was low. Thornton responded by taking Virgin off the table and cutting all communication with EMI. The banker made one other move: he phoned attorney John Eastman in New York. A low-key but highly respected player in the entertainment and arts industries, Eastman represents such clients as his brother-in-law Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, and David Bowie. Eastman put out feelers for Thornton. A short while later, Eastman and Thornton flew to L.A. and met with Mike Ovitz, the CAA chief, who had been the deal-maker on Matsushita's purchase of MCA. The meeting was encouraging: Ovitz assured them the music industry was an area of strategic interest to Matsushita. The next step was to call Felix Rohatyn at Lazard Frères. Rohatyn, who was on the board of MCA, agreed to meet. A few weeks later, Thornton got a call: could Branson come out to MCA's headquarters in Universal City?

Branson, Virgin Records director Ken Berry, Eastman, and Thornton weren't expecting the group that greeted them in August in the meeting room at MCA headquarters. Sitting



Branson and his wife, Joan: "She's the only person in the world who's totally unimpressed with Richard."

around the conference table with MCA music-entertainment chairman Al Teller were Lew Wasserman, the legendary seventy-eight-year-old chairman of MCA; Sid Sheinberg, the company's president; and David Geffen, founder and head of the MCA-owned Geffen and DGC labels. "You don't get those guys in a room for a full day unless they are goddamn serious," says a member of the Virgin team.

Geffen, who has known Branson for more than a dozen years, started the discussions on a skeptical note: there was an obvious geographic fit because Virgin was mostly European and MCA was strongest in America, but what were the real revenue enhancements to be had from acquiring Virgin? Virgin argued that a combined operation could save $80 million a year in overhead. "They were impressed that the synergy was real," says one Virgin participant. "And if they genuinely wanted to make the record business a strategic business, then they'd have to pay up. Who the hell else were you gonna buy?"

Virgin's pitch struck the right notes. At one point, MCA retained attorney Martin Lipton to do the contract work. According to Branson, Geffen sang the praises of the Japanese firm—having seen the value of his MCA shares shoot from $540 million to $710 million in the Matsushita buyout. With several successful Japanese partnerships of his own already in place, Branson said he'd be willing to make a deal with Matsushita.

There was no reply from Tokyo. "It would be a little too pointed to say they turned it down," says one Virgin insider. "It was a little bit more Japanese than that. They literally never said yes, never said no; they were always kind of there and not there."

Then Geffen telephoned Jim Fifield at home and said Matsushita was out. Thornton and Branson abruptly found themselves back where they'd started. The danger now was that other suitors would want to paw the merchandise. When Mickey Schulhoff, the vice-chairman of Sony U.S.A., called Eastman, he was rebuffed. Branson had also been approached by Martin Davis of Paramount and Michael Eisner at Disney, but neither company had the manufacturing or distribution operations needed to squeeze the most value out of a Virgin purchase. "In the music industry, a lot of guys don't want to be left out of a deal," says the insider. "They may not want to *buy* it, but they don't want to be left out. We didn't want to give somebody the luxury of picking it apart."

Then, in January, Virgin heard from the media giant Bertelsmann. Michael Dornemann, the head of the Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG), which includes Arista and RCA in America, flew to London to take a look at Virgin's books. He was reportedly extremely eager to do the deal—although the record operation wasn't a big money-maker, the cash turnover was impressive. Virgin could deliver hits and be expected to keep BMG's distribution pipeline and billing up for years. But then, in late February, Dornemann told Thorn EMI that BMG would also pass.

Although EMI now seemed to be the only bona fide player, Southgate discovered this gave him little leverage. He had been hoping Branson's airline troubles would force him to drop his price, but now—after two years and several real approaches from other buyers—it was obvious that the Virgin king was not going to blink.

If he wasn't worried about getting his price, Branson was increasingly anxious about separating from the company he'd led for twenty years. "I've never seen Richard in such agony over anything," says an airline employee who traveled with him during the negotiations. "He was really vulnerable; he didn't know what to do."

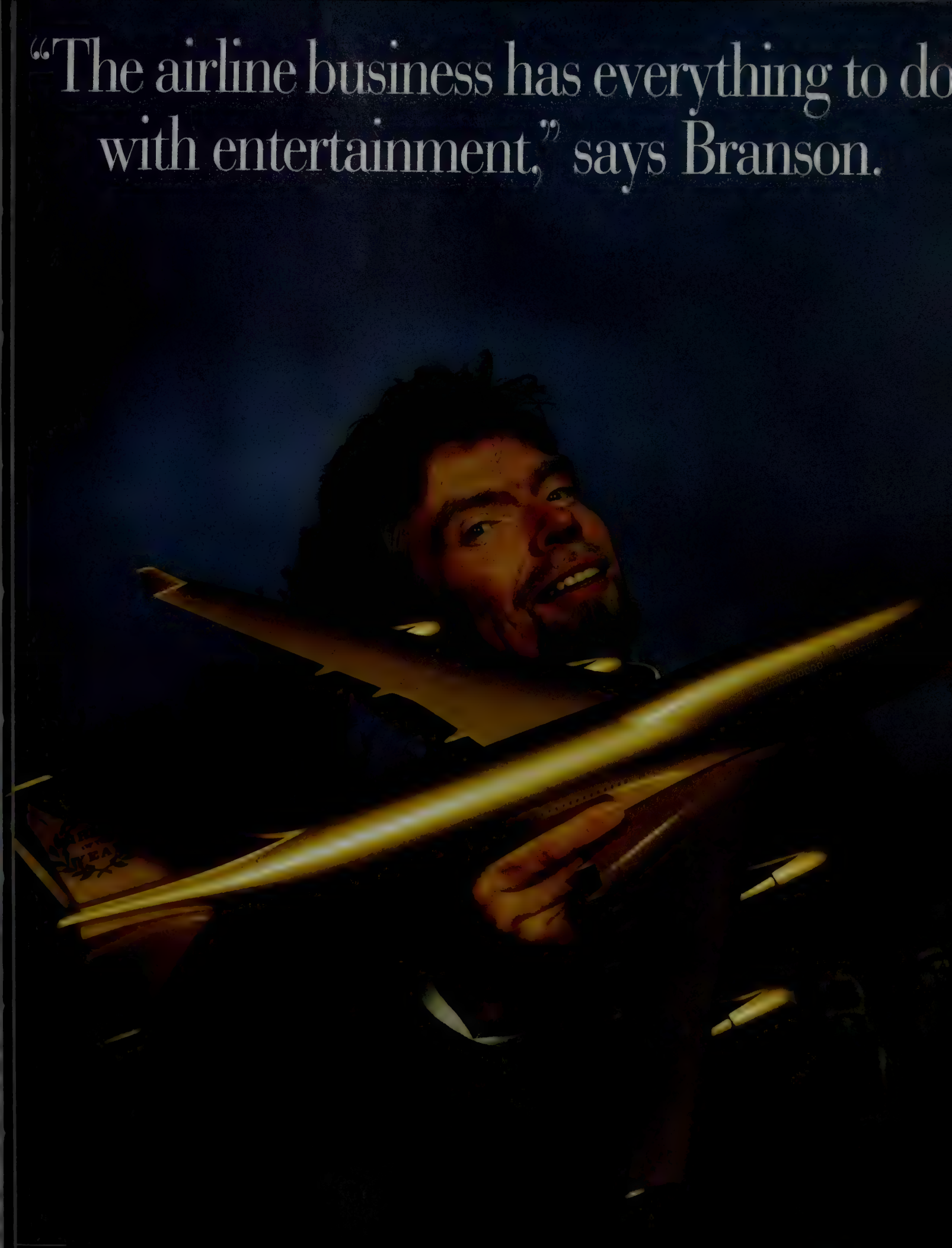
But on March 1, the agreement for the sale of Virgin Records was hammered out on a rival British Airways jet. Southgate and Thornton were both scheduled to fly to New York on the Concorde; they arranged to sit together on the three-hour flight, and by the time the plane landed, Thornton knew he had a deal. All that remained was for Branson to inform Virgin Records' 25 percent partner, Fujisankei's Pony Canyon Records, of the sale to Thorn EMI. (Pony Canyon could have exercised an option that gave it thirty days to match the bid.) At 2:30 A.M. on March 6, the last major independent record company in the world was no more.

Originally conceived as a stock deal, the purchase was switched at the last minute to all cash: Branson was now free to pursue his own plans, and in a recession there are always bargains to be had. Virgin Records, however, was not one of them. The price—£510 million in cash plus assumption of £50 million of Virgin's debt—was not a penny less than what Branson had wanted from the beginning.

The day after the sale, a Saturday, Branson and Simon Draper sat down with the London staff of Virgin Records in the operation's modest Ladbroke Grove offices. EMI had guaranteed it would not "absorb" Virgin; the company would maintain its signature style, and the worldwide operation would continue to be run independently by Ken Berry. Branson, meanwhile, would assume the title of "president for life" of Virgin Records. Still, he grew misty-eyed when he pledged to keep in touch with everyone. As Virgin employees stood up to talk about their years with the company, he finally couldn't take any more. With Draper already crying, Branson burst into tears and ran from the room, out the front door, and into the street. An era had ended.

"Its like will never be seen again," says Al Clark. "You could never set up anything like that now, not just because of a nervous economy. The spirit has changed. People now talk in a kind of ludicrous biz-speak entirely devoid of irony—that betokens a more solemn world. You get twenty-year-olds talking about market penetration *(Continued on page 209)*

"The airline business has everything to do with entertainment," says Branson.



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"Airline
the Year."

Photograph by ALASTAIR THAIN



THE WHITE STUFF

A guide to the best of the excellent late-vintage white-Burgundy bargains

BY JOEL L. FLEISHMAN

For years now, Burgundians have confidently maintained that the demand for their noble red wines and sublime whites was inviolable, that the singular flavors and precious supply of Burgundy—which amounts to one-tenth of the annual output of Bordeaux—would forever ensure regal prices. It now appears that they were wrong, that they were greedy for too long, and that a rebellious market has forced them to come to their senses. Within the past few months, the leading Burgundy vintners have guillotined their prices, implementing the most dramatic price cuts in their wines in two decades, some as sharp as 40 percent. This is not to say that the tags on the bottles are suddenly egalitarian—judged against wines of comparable quality, the prices of Burgundies are still rather haughty. But they may not get much more affordable than they are now. Happily, the 1989 white Burgundies are the finest of the decade, so if there is a perfect moment for white-Burgundy lovers to stock their cellars, this is it.

The revolution in Burgundy prices is due largely to overseas rivalries with new foreign powers. A few years ago no other part of the world could match the imperial reds of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Mongeard-Mugneret, Maume, or the Comte de Vogüé, or the oaky whites bearing the proud names of Montrachet and Corton-Charlemagne (not to mention the lowlier Meursaults and Chablis). But now there are armadas of high-quality upstarts—Chardonnays from the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand, and Pinot Noirs from the U.S.—each crafted with the same old-world techniques but selling for a fraction of the prices Burgundies command.

There is, in addition, a more structural explanation for the fall of the houses of Burgundy: the varying label descriptions on their bottles are so maddeningly complex that they have frightened off nearly all but the most patient genealogists. Burgundy is home to a baffling network of commune names, vineyard names, and quality designations such as "Premier Cru" and "Grand Cru." Factor in wide variations in the quality of *négociants* and vintages, and temperamental behavior in storage, and it's no wonder that many white-wine lovers have been attracted to the unpretentious bloodlines of Californian and other Chardonnays, which, like Bordeaux, can be charted simply through the name of the winery and vintage.

To sort through these difficulties, this column organized a blind tasting of fifty 1989 white Burgundies. (Each bottle was sampled three times: upon opening, twelve hours later, and six hours after that.) Here are our favorites, with the most impressive asterisked.

At the less expensive end of the price scale: Thevenot-Le-Brun Bourgogne Hautes Côtes de Nuits Clos du Vignon ($12), which featured firm apple and tobacco flavors that still tasted fresh after eighteen hours; Joseph Drouhin Rully ($10), oaky with a hint of sweet spearmint; Joseph Drouhin Laforet ($7), creamy and delicately pungent, but for early drinking only.

In the middle range: *Joseph Drouhin Chassagne-Montrachet ($20), an explosive mouthful of peppery fresh lime; *Domaine Ramonet Chassagne-Montrachet ($27), showcasing lean, sweet lime and prickly anise; *Paul Pernot Bourgogne Chardonnay ($22), offering husky, spicy, oaky dry apple and lime; Joseph Drouhin Saint Aubin ($24), pleasantly peppery and oaky; *Pierre Matrot Meursault ($25), a vigorous blend of spicy lime and spearmint; *Louis Latour Meursault ($21), showing viscous, oaky lime and tobacco; Louis Michel Chablis ($20), with lean lime and tobacco flavors, very firm; Joseph Drouhin Puligny-Montrachet ($20), tasting of lime, oak, and bone-dry anise; Olivier Leflaive Meursault ($25), with sparkling clean and dry lime and anise.

Finally, the dearest: *Domaine Ramonet Chassagne-Montrachet Les Caillerets ($42), a powerful mixture of sweet oak and lime; *Domaine Ramonet Chassagne-Montrachet Les Ruchottes ($46), lacing astringent dry oak with stirring anise flavors; *Joseph Matrot Puligny-Montrachet Les Chalumeaux ($37), with a huge taste of peppery sweet young lime; *Pierre Matrot Puligny-Montrachet Les Combettes ($37), featuring a prickly sweet and dry anise edged with astringent lime; *Louis Jadot Duc de Magenta Puligny-Montrachet Clos de la Garenne ($60), an amazing balance of sweet oak, anise, and lime; *Olivier Leflaive Puligny-Montrachet Les Garennes, Premier Cru ($45), a creamy concoction of desert-dry anise and oak; *Domaine Ramonet Bâtard-Montrachet ($85), pure Burgundian sour oaky lime with a rich, peppery finish; *Joseph Drouhin Puligny-Montrachet Les Folatières ($45), a fresh breeze of dry spearmint tempered by anise. □

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THE MAN'S DIAMOND

The Gift He'll Never Forget

Ivana Czechs In

(Continued from page 138) in a draw last March, her marital ordeal is still not behind her, and her financial future is not as secure as it seems. Trump is threatening to take everything back, including the $10 million, including the Trump Tower triplex she's entitled to live in until 1993, including—"Gods forbid," as Ivana puts it—the three children.

Nor has she figured out who—or what—she wants to be, now that she's no longer Mrs. Donald Trump, dutiful wife and happy hotel executive. "It was teamwork," Eva O'Neill says of the Trumps' bedroom-and-boardroom marriage. "He put her in charge and she loved it. It gave her power."

Though her romantic life seems to be in working order since she replaced an older married man, chemicals tycoon Ken Lieberman, with Riccardo Mazzucchelli, who is about her own age and already divorced, there are persistent rumors among her close friends that she is still emotionally torn between the two.

Socially, she seems to be everywhere at once. And nowhere at all. Cuddling with Riccardo at the Paris couture shows, dragging a butler and a cook to rented houses in Cap Ferrat and Saint-Moritz, tossing Czech charity parties in New York, arriving overdressed at Ascot—"I've got to tell Ivana she can't wear those orange hooker shoes," Estée Lauder reportedly commented. A titled Parisian who has watched her Concorde in and out of the Ritz these past two years says, "That jet-set life is over. Completely, completely over. And Ivana still believes in it. That's what's sad."

Sometimes—leading her opera-ball contingent around the cobblestoned streets of Prague at ten o'clock in the morning in a long sable coat and four-inch black alligator stilettos, for example—she just seems lost. And then out of the blue her coquettish side flashes: as she poses in front of the Prague cathedral, a friend hollers, "Say whiskey!" Ivana comes back with "You know how you make the men smile? Forget the whiskey. Forget the cheese. You tell them, 'Say sex.' "

"She doesn't know," says Massimo Gargia. "She's like the movie stars. They don't want to know." She's more like a perpetual movie starlet, searching for her one big defining role, but in the meantime accepting almost any halfway decent offer that comes along. Ivana's quandary: how does the ultimate eighties wife become a credible nineties woman?

This month, 250,000 copies of Ivana Trump's first novel, *For Love Alone*, will be shipped to American bookstores by Pocket Books, which has her signed to a $1 million two-book contract. The 532-page novel will also be published in Britain, by Century. It is *not*, Ivana insists, autobiographical, even though the heroine, called Katrinka, is a beautiful Czechoslovak skier turned model who marries a rich American, runs a hotel in Manhattan (called the Praha), and goes through a long, drawn-out divorce. In the book, Katrinka's husband, Adam Graham, is old money from Newport, Rhode Island. "[Katrinka]," writes Ivana, "never missed a work by Kundera, and liked to reread Kafka's *The Castle* from time to time. It had been one of her mother's favorite books, and reading it made Katrinka feel close to her."

"It's a commercial woman's novel, but with the quality," Ivana says, adding articles merrily. "I don't say I'm the Shakespeare, but it's not just about the beautiful people and the gorgeous yachts and the fabulous homes and a lot of sex. I tried to put in more the feelings." She doesn't hide the fact that she had the help of Camille Marchetta, a professional writer—"my girl, the Camille," she calls her. And she says that the book that inspired her was *A Woman of Substance*. Will Ivana Trump become the Barbara Taylor Bradford of the nineties?

Or the next Estée Lauder? There's a line of Ivana creams and body products on the way, she says, from Czechoslovakia. ("I want to help the country.") And when the economy improves, she's ready with her Ivana perfume. ("I'm working on the bottle. I'm going to do it with the Czech crystal. It's actually not crystal, it's cut glass.")

The new Martha Stewart? There's an Ivana catalogue in the works. The new Diane Von Furstenberg? The Ivana line of blouses and leggings from Leonard of Paris is already in the shops. The new Susan Lucci? Ivana made her acting debut last November on *One Life to Live*, playing the operator of an Atlantic City casino called Ivana's. The new Claudia Schiffer? Ivana stole Thierry Mugler's ready-to-wear show last October in Paris, sashaying down the runway in a silver-sequined "cowgirl" gown to tumultuous applause. (Other "celebrity" models included porn star Jeff Stryker and transvestite Lypsinka; at the last minute Anjelica Huston refused to go on.)

Or how about the new Margaret Thatcher? Ivana the public speaker—she gets about $20,000 per speech—crossed paths with the former prime minister on the lecture circuit last December, at a stockbrokers' conference in Calgary, Alberta. ("They had three keynote speakers. One was the Lieutenant General Kelly—he was under the Schwarzkopf in Gulf War. The second one was Margaret Thatcher. And I was Saturday.") In Canada, Ivana's topic was "Management, Leadership, and Motivation." For a Miami women's group in February, she switched to "Daring to Be Yourself."

Finally, why not Ivana as the new Brooke Astor? In January, she was appointed to the board of the Fund for Arts and Culture in Central and Eastern Europe, joining such Establishment stalwarts as Livingston Biddle, Schuyler Chapin, and Senator Claiborne Pell. To introduce such potential contributors as Georgette Mosbacher, Ace Greenberg, and *Penthouse* executive Kathy Keeton to some of the board members, Ivana gave a cocktail party at the fabled Trump Tower triplex. "You got off the elevator on the sixty-seventh floor," said one amazed Old Guard guest, "and there was Ivana, with a glass of champagne in her hand, standing at the front door of this white-and-gold-and-crystal-and-marble *sandwich*—that's what the living room looks like, because the ceiling is so low. And behind her was this table *piled* with caviar and smoked salmon, and lots of champagne, and lots of champagne flutes. And Ivana *never* let go of her glass of champagne, not even when she was making her speech. She thanked the Plaza hotel for providing waiters, and then thanked 'the very special people who donated the caviar and salmon and Roederer Cristal champagne,' and in the next breath she added, 'who in my new life I am representing.' The woman is *all* business. She doesn't do *anything* without a quid pro quo."

When the news that Ivana Trump had become the American "spokesperson" for Roederer Cristal champagne—which at $110 a bottle is even more expensive than Dom Pérignon—reached Paris, one society snoot quipped, "Well, I guess that means we'll all be switching to Krug."

"Publicity has its value, sweetheart. You'll see," Adam Graham tells Katrinka in *For Love Alone*. There are those who think that this is a lesson the author learned only too well in real life.

"The most important thing in Ivana's life is publicity," says a New York social figure. "She's exactly like Donald in that way. They live for publicity. It's like a drug for them. A lady getting a divorce—a lady—doesn't get *photo-*



GIVENCHY

NEIMAN MARCUS

Ivana Czechs In

graphed for getting a divorce. You say, 'This is my private life—no photographs, no interviews.' Ivana did the cover of *Vogue*!" Like much of Park Avenue society, this woman had rallied to Ivana's side when the story of her collapsing marriage first broke in Liz Smith's column, which makes the harshness of her judgment all the more surprising, though not unusual. Even Ivana's friends criticize her hyped-up wheeling and dealing.

They seem to forget that this is a woman who wore a hard hat to the construction site of the Grand Hyatt hotel, who ran the Trump Castle Casino Resort in rough-and-ready Atlantic City, who put the half-dead Plaza hotel back on the map of Manhattan. A woman who negotiated one prenuptial and three postnuptial agreements drawn up by Roy Cohn, increasing her settlement from $30,000 a year to $75,000 to a lump sum of $2.5 million, and who was holding out for $100 million instead of the $25 million she was entitled to under the final 1987 agreement. A woman who spent fourteen years dealing with the man who wrote *The Art of the Deal*. Her Plaza-hotel salary of one dollar a year and all the dresses she could wear may have been demeaning, but she exploited it to the hilt, flying to the Paris couture shows every January and July as she had since the early eighties and ordering several numbers from Ungaro, a few more from Saint Laurent, and one or two each from Dior, Valentino, and Lacroix, to the tune of an estimated half a million dollars a year. Donald paid the bills on time. Now that she has to pay them herself, she's shopping Ungaro boutique and bartering with the couturiers. She agreed to sit in the front row at Mila Schön's show in Paris in January in exchange for a Concorde ticket, a suite at the Ritz, and a selection of Mila Schöns.

Yet in spite of all the criticism she brings down on herself, no one has written her off. On the contrary, she's still the talk of several towns.

"I had lunch with her the other day at Le Cirque," says Jerry Zipkin. "She's adorable and nice, and I like her. But the entire lunch was about Ivana—her book, her cosmetics, her champagne, her speeches—without so much as a How-are-you?"

"She's been around Donald too long," says another tycoon's wife. "It's all self-promotion. And then she'll surprise you. You'll get in one or two lines about yourself, and months later, on an appropriate holiday, you'll get this present that reflects something you said. There is this basic caring and thoughtfulness."

"She has a Rolodex with everyone's birthday on it," says the male half of a New York power couple. "But—and this is so typical of Ivana—she sent me a card on my wife's birthday."

"I'm rather entranced by her," says London gossip columnist Nigel Dempster. "She tries, she's got a good heart, she's charitable. I've always said that if there was life after Trump, Ivana would survive and Donald wouldn't."

Three days after her opera ball, Ivana Trump flew from Prague to New York to face her ex-husband in court. Donald Trump was seeking to reinstate a confidentiality clause prohibiting her from publicly talking or writing about him or their marriage without his permission, which had been deleted by the New York State judge who signed their final divorce decree on May 22, 1991. If the five-judge appellate-court panel rules in Donald's favor, he could file contempt-of-court charges *and* a civil suit for breach of contract against Ivana for talking to Barbara Walters on *20/20* earlier that May about her now legendary confrontation with Marla Maples on an Aspen ski slope during the Trump family's 1989 Christmas vacation.

If the court rules against him, Trump has told friends, he might evict Ivana from Trump Tower, refuse to pay her the $4 million due her upon vacating, *and* maybe even try to get back the $10 million she received last March. He has already cut off her $30,000-a-month alimony. (Ivana was also given a two-bedroom apartment in the Trump Plaza condo on Third Avenue, which she has rented out for $4,000 a month, and a mansion in Greenwich, Connecticut, which she recently placed on the market for $18 million.)

Donald chose to threaten her openly with a custody battle. On the morning she was due in court, Ivana awoke to this New York *Daily News* headline: TRUMP: I WANT THE KIDS.

"I've seen her in tears so many times," Riccardo Mazzucchelli told me, "over things her ex-husband is doing to her. It's not easy for her—to show she is worth something as herself, rather than just as the wife of someone."

Mazzucchelli stayed in Prague for business meetings while Ivana was in New York, rejoining her the following weekend in Saint-Moritz. I stayed in the Czech capital for a few more days, too, interviewing people who knew Ivana during her student days at Charles University's physical-education institute. I also made a four-hour drive to Zlín, the grim factory town in eastern Moravia where she was born and raised.

The picture that emerged of Ivana Zelníčková Trump was much more complex than the impression most people have from reading about her in the press. It's the portrait of a highly disciplined and motivated woman whose understanding of the world has been distorted by growing up under a Communist dictatorship and marrying into a capitalist one. If she sometimes seems calculating, it's because she had to be to get out of the dismal and paranoid world she was born into. If she sometimes seems mercenary, it's because she had to be to cope with the crass and greedy world she wed into.

Her saving grace has always been her unaffected charm. How can you dislike a woman whose idea of putting on airs is to say she speaks five languages and, when asked which, answers, "Well, the English. And then if you speak the Czech, you speak the Polish. And if you speak the Russian—I did get a dose of it in the school—you speak the Yugoslav."

"One of the nicest things about her," says a man-about-Manhattan, "is that she says she's from a modest background, unlike so many New York ladies. She doesn't pretend she was born a Schön-born in a palace in Prague." Nevertheless, hardly any details about her life before marrying Donald, in 1977, have been published before, and over years of giving interviews Ivana has volunteered precious few facts about anything other than her skiing career, which she exaggerated—she raced for a top-ranked Czechoslovak team, but never made the Olympic team as she once claimed.

Eva O'Neill, whose family fled Carlsbad, Czechoslovakia, after the war, says that Ivana's reticence comes from growing up behind the Iron Curtain. "Ivana told me, 'We couldn't say anything to anybody; we had to be so careful.'... It's still very hard for her to open up."

"I really don't want to—and can't—talk about it," Ivana Trump told me in Saint-Moritz when I asked her about her court date with Donald Trump two days before. Though she has confided to friends that she considers Donald's legal maneuverings "harassment" and "psychological war," designed to break her both emotionally and financially, she was extremely cautious about him during our interview. "What I can say," she said, "is that I just want to go on with my life, and I wish Donald the best. I hope he's

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Ivana Czechs In

happy and that he finds the love he's looking for." (Take that, Miss Georgia Peach.) "This kind of thing, it's totally counterproductive. What I'm worrying about is the children, because they are innocent and they are in the middle of the whole thing."

She had brought the two younger children, Ivanka, ten, and Eric, eight, back with her to Saint-Moritz—the eldest, Donald junior, thirteen, was in boarding school—and I asked her how she felt about accusations that she had been traveling too much and not spending enough time with her children.

"That's the only thing which really upsets me terribly," she answered. "I spend *all* the time with them. The children are *living* with me. And if, because I'm the working mother, if I'm not home for three days, a lot of mothers are not home for three days. And I always have my mother around; two nannies which are around—not that they can replace me, by no means. I never leave the children more than three or four days. But if I have to make a trip to the Prague for the charity—hey, how long we were in Prague? Three days. And right back in the New York, go to the court, got my business done, grabbed the kids, and back in here.... So I think I'm a terrific mother. I'm very proud of that." (She neglected to mention that she had spent a day in Miami and six days in Saint-Moritz without the children immediately prior to being in Prague.)

I asked her if she was still friendly with her former in-laws.

"Yes, of course. They're very good people. The mother-in-law, she's just fabulous woman. And the father-in-law, he's a hardworking guy."

And Blaine and Robert?

"Absolutely. Blaine and Robert." She paused, as if to wait for the next question, and when it didn't come, because I was waiting for the rest of her answer, she added Donald's two sisters to the list of Trumps she still likes. "And Maryanne and Elizabeth."

She paused again. Then she said, "There was some kind of speculation that me and Blaine were not getting along. We never had a problem. It started somewhere in one of the newspapers that there was jealousy between us, that one Trump was coming out and the other one was coming in—I think there's place for ten people, you know. Blaine is a very nice girl. She's doing her thing, she's doing her charity, she's doing whatever she wants to, and I was more into the business—we are different, but our principles are the same."

She paused again, to find a formulation that she was happier with: "Our lifestyles are parallel, but our principles are the same."

What are her principles?

"My principles? I don't cheat, steal, and lie. And I'm not on drugs and any of that stuff. I try to be a good person. I try to do my best."

She was wearing baby blue from head to toe—fur hat, wraparound sweater, stretch pants, cowboy boots. She had just come from a full day on the slopes, and was sitting in a needlepoint wing chair in the middle of the lobby of Badrutt's Palace Hotel, sipping mint tea. Ivana started coming to Saint-Moritz about eight years ago, always with the kids, never with Donald, who, some say, thought it too social and European. She stayed at the Palace and arranged for her mother and father to join her there. (After marrying Trump, she had installed her parents in one of the rare apartment buildings in Zlín not made of concrete slabs.)

This year she rented a chalet in nearby Celerina from her Zurich plastic-surgeon pal, Dr. Peter Meyer-Fürst. (No, he has not operated on her; Dr. Steven Hoefflin, of Santa Monica, California, is most responsible for her new look.) Even after years in Saint-Moritz, she still seemed to be getting everything wrong. (Almost refreshingly so, given the obsession with getting things right in a snob bastion like Saint-Moritz.) For one thing, in a town where *everyone* has a Range Rover, Ivana had Riccardo bring his Rolls-Royce from London—a Corniche convertible with an ivory top and light-blue body, and ivory seats with light-blue piping. For another, *nobody* takes tea in the lobby anymore. The right place is the little bar off the lobby, where the right names—Niarchos, Fürstenberg, Cicogna, Hannover—hide out from the hoi polloi. That Alpine group didn't see much of Ivana in Saint-Moritz, partially because they never saw much of anyone but one another. They did talk about her, though. At a small party the young Niarchoses gave at Peppo Vanini's The Club at Chesa Veglia, a remark attributed to Marella Agnelli about Ivana's cosmetic surgery was making the rounds. "She wanted to look like Mrs. Roger Rabbit, and she *looks* like Mrs. Roger Rabbit."

"It's not easy here, you know," a titled blonde says. "In fact, I think it's almost suicidal of her to come here and try to get invited." She *was* asked to the big Spanish costume party Marc Rich gave this season—which was considered half right (because he has $3 billion) and half wrong (because he's wanted by the I.R.S. for tax evasion)—at which she danced with Prince Ferdinand von Bismarck (who's all right).

And she has her fans among the social set. "I think it's great that she keeps coming back to Saint-Moritz," says Beatrix Millies. "And did not go the way of the normal divorced woman, who is put in a corner and forgotten. I saw her last year with Countess Törring—we just went to the pizzeria for dinner— and she was very nice, easygoing. You like her more in a private situation than at something public, where she feels she has to perform."

"You *must* see her ski," says Princess Teresa von Fürstenberg. "I think that's when her best side comes out. She's a fantastic skier. Elegant. Really elegant."

For the last few years, Ivana Trump has won the gold medal in women's downhill skiing in the annual races at the exclusive Corviglia Club, where her seasonal membership was said to have been sponsored by Prince Dimitri of Yugoslavia, who is an assistant vice president of Sotheby's in the jewelry department. But this year her arch-rival on the slopes, Monica Agusta, of the Italian helicopter family, came in first, because Ivana wouldn't race after the Corviglia Club refused to admit Riccardo Mazzucchelli. "One of the rules of the club is that in order to sponsor someone you must know him for at least two years and quite well," explains Prince Dimitri. "And the problem is, nobody knows Riccardo Mazzucchelli."

So, who is Riccardo Mazzucchelli? That's the question everyone has been asking since photographs of him with Ivana Trump hit the papers for the first time last October. Ivana told a girlfriend that he was very rich. Blaine told a girlfriend that he was great with the kids. Even Jerry Zipkin approved. But nobody seemed to know a thing about him.

He's Italian, forty-eight years old; has been married once, to a half-Greek, half–South African woman named Stella; has a twenty-five-year-old son, who works for an Italian bank and who went to Millfield, one of the most expensive boarding schools in England; has a house near Belgrave Square in London which he rents out and a duplex flat in Knightsbridge which he lives in, as well as a ski condo in Crans-sur-Sierre, Switzerland, and a pied-à-terre in Prague; and had just broken up with a lesser Greek shipping heiress half his age named Suzy Papalios when he met Ivana last June—"during the Ascot Week," as she put it.



LIFE'S PRECIOUS GIFTS.

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Ivana Czechs In

Mazzucchelli told me that his father's family was from Bergamo, but of Austrian and Russian origins—which perhaps explains his ice-blue Siberian-wolf-dog eyes—and that his mother's family, the Castrocanis, came from Tuscany, and could be traced back to a thirteenth-century Italian general. He said he grew up in Rome, where his father ran a "very big mining company, and also did a lot of business in India." In 1966, at age twenty-two, he started his own construction and consulting company, ASCO, and settled in Lusaka, Zambia. "Our first big job was the vice president's office," he said. "I made my first million—I speak in dollar terms—when I was twenty-six." His company supervised the construction of everything from bowling centers to sewage systems in Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Abu Dhabi, and Qatar. Over the years, he said, ASCO has completed projects totaling $3 billion, and he followed up by faxing me a twenty-four-page brochure listing them. There were no listings after 1982.

In recent years, Mazzucchelli said, he began to realize that there was more to life than chasing booms from one developing country to the next. "What's a million more, a million less?" he asked. So he started reading Erich Fromm and thinking about businesses that "can improve the environment." He also surfaced on the London party circuit, turning up frequently at Annabel's, sometimes with the energetic P.R. woman who had come along to Prague, Liz Brewer—her clients have ranged from the Lalique boutique in London to the new First Lady of Zambia.

"He was another guy around town with money," says a Roman social butterfly who flits around London every June. "But he was not considered the catch of the century. Girls I know went out with him, because he's sweet, a gentleman, not married, not gay, and they could bring ten people to dinner at Harry's Bar and he would always *insist* on picking up the check, which is very nice, but it also shows some insecurity, don't you think?"

"This guy can't get over that he's with Ivana Trump," says another Italian, who remembers him in Sardinia fifteen years ago. "He was the bourgeois Italian, typical, showing off his not-so-big boat. Mazzucchelli in Italy is like saying Smith. There are millions of Mazzucchellis."

I asked Eva O'Neill, who put them together at a Claridge's dinner given by Georgia Hofmann, the widow of the chairman of Johnson & Johnson, if it was love at first sight between Riccardo and Ivana. "I think it was attraction at first sight," she answered. "The magic word is 'chemistry.' "

"She's not in love with him," says another close friend of Ivana's. "She told me she isn't. But she doesn't want to go out alone."

"If Donald Trump ever lost anything," said Riccardo Mazzucchelli at the end of our interview, "he lost one hell of a girl."

"I suspect it will end in tears," says Nigel Dempster of Riccardo's romance with Ivana Trump (whom he refers to as "the Trumpette" in his London *Daily Mail* column). Part of the problem, according to Dempster (and others), is that Ivana "can't get Ken Lieberman out of her mind."

And Ken Lieberman, it appears, can't get her out of his. One of his closest friends told me that Lieberman had hired a detective to check on Mazzucchelli's past. "Ken said, 'I'm very concerned about this. I adore her.' He's still *madly in love* with her."

Ivana met Ken Lieberman, who is in his late sixties, and his second wife, Rosemarie, who is Swiss, almost one year to the day before she met Riccardo, at another Ascot Week dinner at Claridge's, this one hosted by Baron and Baroness Ricky di Portanova. The Lieberman fortune is based on paints and chemicals, and the business was originally located in Los Angeles, though it is now run from Switzerland. In the early eighties, Ken and Rosemarie bought three adjacent houses in Knightsbridge, worth about $3.5 million, and, with the help of energetic Liz Brewer, tossed huge costume parties every summer during the two weeks of Wimbledon. A photo of Ken dressed as a centurion at their "Roman" bash has run over and over in the British press ever since Dempster splashed the news of his relationship with Ivana in March 1991.

Ivana had been "escaping" to London almost every weekend since her marriage collapsed, leaving the children in Greenwich with her mother. She rented a decorated two-bedroom flat near Eva O'Neill's place on Eaton Square. Eva was also going through a difficult divorce, from her last husband, James Stewart, an American cement magnate whose company was on the verge of bankruptcy. A comely, quick, and somewhat controversial woman, she became Ivana's social navigator through the expatriate wilds of Belgravia and Knightsbridge. Eva also took her to Buckingham Palace for a charity concert hosted by Princess Diana. Ivana later told the English press, "I admire so much the Queen's mother, and the Queen herself, she is so professional."

Ivana and Eva frequently crossed paths with the Liebermans, but Ivana's romance with Ken Lieberman didn't flower until February 1991, in Saint-Moritz. It was the first February in eight years that her father, who had died four months before, wasn't there with her, and perhaps the comforting arms of a man more or less his age proved irresistibly reassuring. "Ken likes to take care of women," a longtime friend says. "He's very much a father figure."

But their fling rapidly took on an almost brazen public aspect, as if Ivana wanted to show Donald that she could land another rich man, and the world that she too could break up a marriage. For his part, Ken Lieberman—like Riccardo Mazzucchelli after him—looked incredulous but thrilled to be the sudden object of paparazzi attention. They were caught together in London, New York, and Palm Beach, where they spent a few days at Mar-a-Lago that March. (Under the terms of the divorce agreement, Ivana is allowed to use Mar-a-Lago one month a year.) Everything came to a climax the second weekend in June, when Ivana and Ken turned up together at Valentino's highly publicized thirtieth-anniversary extravaganza in Rome.

Some say that's when Rosemarie Lieberman had had enough and put her foot down. "Ken went back to his wife because she handles all his business affairs," says one friend. "So they're all tied up." Another family friend, decorator Mimmi O'Connell, sees it differently. "It's not a question of money," she says. "Ken is a decent man—I don't think he could have lived with dropping his wife." Lieberman himself was quoted in Dempster's column: "I think I'm too old for her—old men should be left with beautiful memories."

A week later, Ivana met Riccardo Mazzucchelli, who showered her with flowers and lent her his Rolls. She spent most of the summer in the big villa she rented in Cap Ferrat, across the way from Lynn and Oscar Wyatt's. Lieberman's yacht was moored in the nearby harbor, with Rosemarie aboard, but that didn't stop Ivana from calling him up to five times a day. In the middle of August, Ivana and Ken were spotted together at the Hotel San Pietro in Positano, Italy. At the end of August, Ivana and Riccardo attended the four-day Save Venice gala together, and in October



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she made their liaison "official" by posing for the paparazzi with him in Paris at the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe races.

In November, Lieberman quietly flew to Calgary, where Ivana was lecturing. In December, Mazzucchelli gave Ivana a ten-karat yellow-diamond ring from Tiffany. "I mustn't say if it's an engagement ring. Don't put me in a hot spot by asking," he joked with a reporter at the London party where Ivana showed it off.

In February, Nigel Dempster's *Daily Mail* column reported that Riccardo Mazzucchelli might propose to Ivana Trump on Valentine's Day. Meanwhile, William Norwich's *New York Post* column reported that Donald Trump might marry Marla Maples on Valentine's Day. Neither event took place. But Ivana Trump and Riccardo Mazzucchelli did dine with Rosemarie and Ken Lieberman in Saint-Moritz the week after Valentine's Day. "I want to show the people that we are all the friends. You know, just friends. Not *the* friend, like the people think," explained Ivana, dashing through the Palace Hotel lobby in a combination of fake leopard and real fox.

When I asked Ivana Trump about love and marriage and men, she weighed her answers word by word. Has she ever been alone, without a man, for long?

"Well, I always had very long relationships. I don't like to jump. And also . . . it has to be right, the chemistry has to be there. I will not be with a man just for the sake of being with a man."

Does she still believe in love?

"Yeah, I do. I do. I think I do."

Would she like to get married again?

"I want to take my time. I have Riccardo, which is wonderful. But we'll see what happens. They say it takes five years to get over the divorce. I think I will get over it much faster."

It wasn't until I recalled meeting her father at the Paris couture collections that her words really began to fly.

"I was very proud of my dad. He was my best friend. My father was very outgoing, very fun-loving. And when I would go to Paris to the collections—you know, it's a lot of hassle, a lot of pushing and shoving—my father would help me with everything. Then we would go and have a nice lunch. Then, afterward, we would go to another collection, and then in the evening we would go to Maxim's and we would dance our nights off. He was fabulous dancer and we were really great together. We were really great pals. . . . One day I was going to the Dior with my dad, doing some gift shopping. And in the Dior, I met two ladies, which are from New York and we all know them, but I don't want to use their names. And I introduce—I said, 'Mrs. So-and-So and Mrs. So-and-So, this is my father, Miloš Zelníček.' And I could just *see* their little elbows!" She screeched with laughter. "Then, sure enough, three hours later, I get telephone call from New York, from a friend of mine, and she said, 'Ivana, by the way, did you go to the Dior today?' I said, 'Yeah, I went there with my father.' She said, 'I got this strange phone call from our two friends and they said, "Does Ivana have a father? Is he six feet tall? Does he have blue eyes?" ' " She couldn't stop laughing.

When she did, she said, "I miss him terribly. I lost him in two hours. Sixty-four years old. Just . . . heart attack. It was in Czechoslovakia, in mountains. He wasn't feeling well. My mother can't drive, so she went next door to the little dacha of their friends, and they took him to the city. And he was conscious when he came to the hospital, and they sent my mother home—he was going to be all right. She went home and . . . it was a disaster."

A Trump Tower neighbor said that on the day her father died, "you could hear things being broken, things smashing to the floor, and Ivana letting out these astonishing screams like a wounded animal."

Although they had been living apart for almost a year, Donald flew with Ivana and the children to Zlín for Miloš Zelníček's funeral. A mourner from Zlín said that it was a bitterly cold day and at the cemetery Donald stood at the head of the grave between his mother-in-law, Marie Zelníčkova, and Ivana, with one arm around each of them to keep them warm. The three children and their two governesses stood beside the grave. By the time they returned to New York, Donald and Ivana had decided to get their divorce as soon as possible and work out the financial part later.

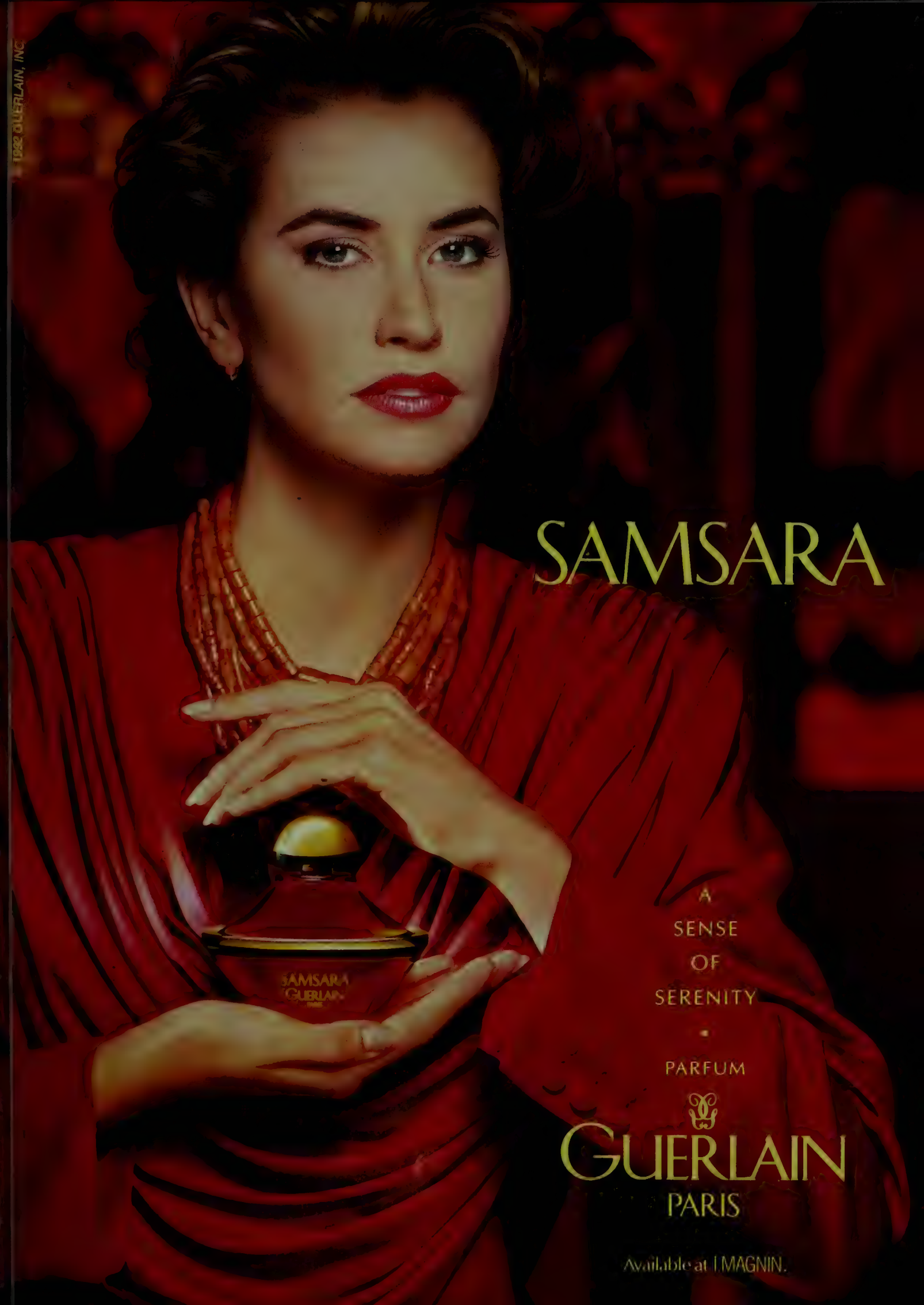
Miloš Zelníček started teaching Ivana how to ski and swim when she was two years old. She had been born seven weeks prematurely, on February 20, 1949, in Zlín, which had been renamed Gottwaldov, after a founder of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. She had spent more than two months in an incubator, and her father believed that sports would strengthen his fragile only child. A competitive swimmer and a graduate of a technical university, he worked as an electrical engineer. Her mother was a telephone operator.

Anyone who has seen Zlín, as it is now called again, would instantly understand Ivana Trump's attraction to glamour and glitz. Most of the town was built between 1933 and 1946 by the Bata shoe company, and consists of sprawling red brick factories with smokestacks belching coal smoke, and block after block of red brick barracks-houses for the factory workers. The Communists encircled this dreary center with a ring of even drearier concrete-slab apartment blocks. The town square is lined with prefabricated rows of stores with names like OK (which sells bags) and P&P (sweaters). There's a knitting shop and a knickknack shop and a place called Bistro with white Formica stand-up counters. The swellest place in this company town turned Marxist model city—population 84,000—is the tall gray Hotel Moskva, which has a large brown restaurant.

Ivana grew up in one of the Bata-built barracks-houses, a flat-roofed, two-story square box, divided in half for two families, with four rooms for each family. Her paternal grandparents worked for Bata. Her maternal grandparents were grape growers in Mikulov, a village near the Austrian border. "The Zelníčeks were very well situated," said a neighbor, "because her father was head of the ski club—which meant they spent every weekend in the mountains."

Ivana said that she won her first race for the Zlín team when she was six years old. She was also a star of the local swimming team, bicycling to the indoor pool at six in the morning for two hours of swimming practice before school, bicycling to the gym after school for several more hours of calisthenics, traveling almost every weekend for either a swimming or a skiing competition. One weekend when she was twelve, there was a scheduling conflict, and her coaches and parents sat her down and told her the time had come to choose between the two sports. "I showed up on the mountains," she said. "And I never regretted it."

A Zlín neighbor, Mary Odložilová, remembered Ivana in her early teens. "She was very clever, very good in school, and very pretty—tall and skinny." By then she had progressed from the local ski team to a regional one, and when she was about fifteen she made the junior national team, which meant traveling to races outside Czechoslovakia, usually by bus. Ivana told me about the first time she went to the West, for a race in Salbach, Austria: "I could not believe the amount of fruits you could see in the stores. I don't think I ever


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saw the banana before. It was quite a shock."

"She was very ambitious right from the start," says George Syrovatka, a slightly older skier who met Ivana then and became her boyfriend. "You have to be ambitious being a competitor in sports. Or you can't do the sport."

In 1967, Ivana moved to Prague, as a freshman at Charles University. There was a new reform leader in power, Alexander Dubček, and the capital was blooming with new cafés, film clubs, jazz bars that stayed open all night. "It was wild," says Helena Fierlinger, who was a student in Prague then. "In fact, when I came to New York a couple of years later, I thought it was very puritanical compared to what had been going on in Prague."

Ivana, a brunette then, started modeling a bit, and was also traveling more and more, now with the top-ranked Charles University team, to posh places like Cortina, Italy, and Mégève, France. She was also still going out with George Syrovatka, whose father was an important architect. In August 1968, when the Russians invaded and put an end to the "Prague Spring," Ivana was out of the country, working as a mother's helper in Munich, she said. She managed to get through to her parents in Zlín. "My father did pack up all my clothes and meet me on the other side of Austrian border. I drove there—I had little Fiat then—and we talked about what to do. . . . My father told me it was my decision if I wanted to defect. But I could not do that, because it would have meant not seeing my father and my mother for maybe ten, fifteen years."

George Syrovatka's parents, who were in London when the tanks rolled in, decided to stay in the West, and settled in Montreal. Ivana moved into their Prague apartment with George, and lived with him until he finished his studies and left for Montreal, in 1971. George arranged for an Austrian ski buddy of his, Alfred Winklmayr, to marry Ivana so that she could have an Austrian passport and join him in Canada. But Ivana didn't follow as planned—because she had met someone new.

Jiří Štaidl, songwriter, poet, and playboy, was in the center of Prague's fastest, richest, and most glamorous scene—a scene that became increasingly paranoid as the Communist crackdown became increasingly repressive. "A lot of people were sitting on two chairs then," says Helena Fierlinger. "You didn't know who to trust, because the government was trying very hard to turn people into informers."

One of Ivana's good friends throughout this period was Jiří Janoušek, a rising young journalist for *Mladý Svět*, the *Rolling Stone* of Czechoslovakia, who helped her get modeling jobs and who later married the daughter of the hard-line prime minister Lubomír Štrogal. "I met Ivana when she was seventeen or eighteen," Janoušek told me. "She was very natural and more intelligent than girls her age. They didn't have the ambition to show their brains, but Ivana had this. It's not easy to make a career in Prague as she did. Even when you see her choice of partner, Jiří Štaidl—he was not the most handsome man in Prague, but he was certainly one of the most intelligent men in Prague. It shows she was not silly."

Ivana met Jiří Štaidl at a Karel Gott concert that a girlfriend took her to sometime in 1972. Štaidl had published several books of poetry and was turning out hit songs for Karel Gott, who was very popular in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland as well as in Czechoslovakia. "One day Jiří came to my home with Ivana," says his brother, Ladislav Štaidl, who managed the Karel Gott group, "and said, 'This is my new girlfriend.' She was a beautiful girl, but for my taste she wore too much makeup. She even slept with makeup. But she was fun—a lot of laughing, a lot of dancing." Ladislav Štaidl said that Ivana lived with his brother for a year and a half in their villa in Jevany, a lakeside town outside Prague popular with the politburo set and the entertainers and athletes who were making hard cash in the West.

"It was a great love," Karel Gott told me. "Ivana was Jiří's muse." "I would have stayed in Czechoslovakia and married him," Ivana said. But it wasn't meant to be: Jiří Štaidl had been drinking heavily the night in October 1973 when he ran a light on the road to Jevany in his sporty Renault and a truck plowed into him. Ivana was supposed to be with him, but for reasons that remain unclear he had another girl in the car. "He was supposed to pick me up at five o'clock in the afternoon at one of the cafés on Old Town Square," Ivana said. She assumed that he had been delayed at the foreign ministry, because he was returning from Munich. "And very often when you were coming from a tour, you had to report to the Communists. They would drill you—you know, with whom you met? And why this and why that?"

I asked Ivana if *she* ever had to report to the Communists. "They called me once. It was quite scary. I had to go to Zlín, because they made you report where you were from. You had to be careful not to offend them. But they try to talk you into being the spy. They don't say, they hint. I told them I was into the sports. I played dumb."

After Jiří Štaidl's funeral, which was attended by hundreds of friends and fans, Ivana left for Canada. She stayed with an aunt and uncle in Toronto for a few months, she said, "studying the English at the Berlitz," and then moved to Montreal, where she lived with George Syrovatka in a one-bedroom apartment in a doorman building called the Château Maisonneuve, in the Westmount area. Syrovatka had opened a ski-equipment and bicycle shop, and Ivana began modeling for a well-established Czech-émigré designer, Vali Dubski, who was sort of the Mollie Parnis of Montreal.

"Ivana had great discipline right from the beginning," Dubski said. "When she was supposed to be there at eight, she was there at quarter to eight." According to her agent, Audrey Morris, Ivana soon became a regular runway model for leading local designers such as Leo Chevalier and John Warden, and her biggest client was Grosvenor furs.

Ivana sent her parents "a hundred dollars or so" every month, she told me, and flew them to Montreal on alternating holidays. "Her father never missed a show she was in when he was in town," Audrey Morris said. "If she was in three shows of the same designer in the same day, he would be in the audience all three times. She had a very quiet, simple life when she was living in Montreal with George, who was very nice, very quiet."

"You could see she was something special," said Ivan Chadima, a neighbor at the Château Maisonneuve who had also left Czechoslovakia. "I knew she was from Zlín, but we didn't have discussions on those subjects. We weren't worried about where we came from; we were more worried about where we were going."

One night in 1976, Ivana was in New York at Maxwell's Plum, the upscale singles bar on First Avenue, having drinks with some other models after a Grosvenor fur show, when she met Donald Trump. Within a matter of months she married him, putting George Syrovatka aside for a wealthier man for the second time.

When we finished our interview at the Palace Hotel, Ivana took me in her boyfriend's Rolls-Royce, chauffeured by her butler, to her rented chalet in Celerina. She was dying to show me the cover of her book, *For Love Alone*.



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Ivana Czechs In

Riccardo Mazzucchelli was at the chalet, with the two younger children, Ivanka and Eric. Ivana's imported cook brought in a plate of freshly made potato pancakes, though Ivana, counting calories as usual, passed on them. It was a normal family domestic scene, more or less.

Ivanka, who at ten is tall and pretty and blonde and quick with the sarcasm, asked her mother if she could spend a weekend horseback riding in Ireland with a school friend, and Ivana suggested a reciprocal weekend at Mar-a-Lago. "Did you practice this afternoon for the slalom race, honey?" Ivana asked Ivanka.

Ivanka bubbled over about skiing, and then launched into a knowing anecdote about racing with the Kennedys and Don Johnson in Aspen. She made a face when Ivana brought up her ballet lessons.

"The ballet, it's good for your ear," Ivana told her daughter, "and for the music, for the posture, and for your graciousness."

"But, Mom, I don't want to be a professional ballet person."

I asked Ivanka what she wanted to be when she grew up.

Smiling brightly, she answered, "The same as Mom." □

Jay McInerney

(Continued from page 154) a star in his own right, which had led to more glittering invitations, more drinking, and more drugs. Riding that wave had come *Story of My Life*, McInerney's next monologue novel—to a crashing reception. Though his portrait of a twenty-year-old New York party girl remains almost eerily convincing, the exercise struck critics as trivial and irritating. McInerney felt burned-out and beaten-up, and not at all sure that he could write a book again. But he also felt that only writing could save him. One day that winter, he arrived at a cabin on a hill in Dorset, Vermont. Two months later, he had his first 150 pages.

McInerney has often written in bursts like that, eight or ten hours a day, until the book is done: *Bright Lights* came out of a summer, *Story of My Life* from three weeks at Yaddo. But *Brightness Falls* was too big a fish to be reeled in that way. Nor was the work made any easier by the fact that its creator, unlike many of his literary heroes, has never been one for outlines; he tends to write short stories that grow into parts of the plot here and there, and to fill in what's between. It's a choice he justifies with a metaphor from E. L. Doctorow: Writing a novel is like driving a car across country at night; though you can see only as far as your headlights, they can get you all the way there. But there's a lot of anguish in that, as McInerney found over three years and four drafts. "Many mornings I woke up and said, This is absolute shit, I don't know what I'm doing, it was a mistake, let this cup pass from me," McInerney says now. "I was three hundred pages and a year and a half into something, and I didn't even know what it *was*."

The drama in those words is pure McInerney. For which, suggests one longtime friend, you can blame the Irish blood: impetuous, even reckless, McInerney has often seemed to *court* drama, not only in his work but in his life, relishing the thrill of spontaneity, and yet also aware that the more tumultuous the consequences, the better fiction they may become. The irony is that at this latest turn he's done his job too well: nothing in the book he finally finished can match the drama of his new, real-life romance.

"I never believed that thing about friends falling in love," says Helen Bransford sheepishly. She sits curled in a chair in her jewelry workshop, silver bracelets and earrings everywhere. Besides, she says, "we always had this age difference. And Jay always had a girlfriend, and I was always dating someone. And Jay was coming into this great wave of attention and fame."

The house that Bransford now shares with her husband lies on a leafy suburban road. Though not large, it feels regal inside, all soft white sofas and pastel-sponged walls. In one bedroom stands an imposing mahogany-posted family bed; beside it is a wooden easel displaying family portraits. The jewelry workshop lies off the living room. Almost all of Bransford's business is word-of-mouth, to the New York publishing set and now, more than before, to Nashville's country-and-western elite.

Bransford's family, in fact, is one of Nashville's oldest. Her great-grandfather was secretary of state under President Taft and lived in the city's stateliest mansion, Belle Meade, now a public showcase; her mother was born there, too, and retained enough old-world gentility to insist that Helen, as a young lady, wear white gloves whenever she traveled. To Morgan Entrekin, another Nashville native, the Bransfords were always the real thing, the sort of southern family whose lineage is known for miles around, down to the last half-cousin.

It was in 1984 that Entrekin invited Bransford to a dinner he was throwing at Elaine's in honor of *Bright Lights*. "It was the first time at Elaine's for me," McInerney recalls, "and there was Gary [Fisketjon], and Morgan, and I think P. J. O'Rourke, and my wife, Merry, maybe a couple of others. After about half an hour Helen walked in, and I thought, Here is the most drop-dead gorgeous girl, something's happening here, this is my life now. I was totally swept away by her; I thought she was a symbol of everything I'd been trying to come back to in New York. That was the moment, when I met Helen, that the lights in New York came on for me."

By then, Bransford had managed to shed the white gloves. A short, unhappy marriage had induced her to move to London, where she fell in love with Isaac Tigrett, a founder of the Hard Rock Cafe, and worked as a waitress and cashier at the original club for some time, a beautiful blonde with nubs for nails thanks to goldsmithery school. Drifting to New York, she became an assistant to P.R. man Bobby Zarem, and lived with Warren Hoge, then of the *New York Post*. She served briefly as an editorial publicist for *New Times;* one sweltering summer Sunday, editor Peter Kaplan happened by the un-air-conditioned offices to find Bransford on the phone, hard at work—stark naked, with phone numbers scribbled on her arms in red ink.

"Someone once said to me, 'When you're going to hold up a bank, Helen's the one you want to drive the getaway car,' " says Suzanne Goodson, a fellow southerner and one of Helen's closest friends, who met her as she was beginning to make her name as a jewelry designer. "She does exactly what she wants to do, and always has; she's totally uninhibited."

In recent years, Bransford dated a number of socially visible men, including author William Goldman and CAA agent Ron Meyer. But even Suzanne Goodson would not have predicted, last November, that Helen Bransford would marry

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again—certainly not a younger man. "I was . . . *so* stunned."

For seven years, McInerney and Bransford had served as each other's stand-in at black-tie events. "I always found myself saying to people, 'No, you're wrong about him,' " says Bransford. "I felt he'd gotten really overexposed through his own innocence, to his own detriment." Every Christmas, McInerney would buy jewelry from her for his agent and close friend, Amanda Urban, and various girlfriends. "Well, Jay," Helen would greet him cheerily, "I hope you've been promiscuous this year."

Then, last October, McInerney separated from former model Marla Hanson, after a high-profile romance of more than four years. The understanding was that both would take some time to assess the relationship, then decide in late December what to do. One evening McInerney joined Bransford for a movie with Suzanne Goodson and Jerry Goldsmith, of Rothschild, Inc. At Raoul's afterward for dinner, Goodson began to notice a certain electricity in the air. "I could see the way the evening was turning. Toward the end of the meal I said something about how Helen and I had been classmates—which was a dig, of course, because Helen's six years younger than I am. She smiled, and glinted, and then calmly poured a glass of water down my chest. That's when I knew it was time to go. 'Come on, Jerry,' I said, and kicked him. But as I leaned over to kiss Helen good-bye, I dumped *my* glass of water over *her*."

Helen flew back to Nashville the next day—not only to feed her six cats and catch up on business but to check in with her live-in lover, a local doctor. Though she hates to fly, she returned twice to New York in early December. "I guess we were sort of hoping we'd get sick of each other," says McInerney. Bransford was skeptical herself. "In every romance I'd ever had, I'd hoped to have a situation that was black-and-white with no reservations, with real convictions. I'd never had that, so I thought, Hell, grown-up life means there're always shades of gray. But, in fact, that's what this was."

One day in the midst of this, Hanson, who still had keys to McInerney's Village apartment, went over while he was out and found a love letter to Helen. Angry and hurt, she confronted him, which led Helen, in turn, to tell her doctor friend over breakfast one morning in Nashville that she was in love. "So then," says McInerney, "we were out in the open."

By Christmas, McInerney had proposed—on bended knee in a crowded Nashville restaurant. "Two people more allergic to marriage you would have been hard-pressed to find," he says. "But suddenly it seemed like a romantic concept." Jim Signorelli, a *Saturday Night Live* producer who's been one of the gang since McInerney's early days in New York, describes his friend as "romantic beyond all hope." Beyond all reason seemed more like it that Christmas week: the plan the lovers hit upon was to get married in secret, then *keep* the secret for the rest of their lives. City Hall seemed right, but they needed a witness. That Thursday, they called reporter Marie Brenner, a longtime mutual friend, and asked her to serve. Friday at noon, Brenner showed up with rice, a bouquet, a camera, and her daughter, Casey.

The secret held—for about five days. By then Liz Smith had heard the news and warned she'd have to run it; reluctantly, the newlyweds began calling family and friends before the item appeared. One of McInerney's calls was to his father, to announce that a woman his father hadn't met was his brand-new daughter-in-law.

Another call was to Marla.

RING ONCE, reads a sign by the buzzer. THIS ELEVATOR IS VERY SLOW.

After many minutes and more than one ring, the door slides open and Marla Hanson, in scruffy clothes and no makeup, flashes a smile of welcome. Her scars are fainter than they once were, but still visible enough to shock on first sight—jagged lines of urban violence that stun strangers into awkward silence.

We are in Tribeca, in an old building given over to video production, where Hanson has rented an editing room to finish the thirty-minute short that will enable her to graduate this summer from N.Y.U. film school. The film is entitled *Love in Transit*. "It's about lust from a woman's point of view," says Hanson with a wholesome smile. In her voice, and in her manner, she is still unmistakably a nice, sensible, small-town Texas girl. Considering how abruptly her lover of more than four years up and married someone else, she is also surprisingly gracious—though candid.

In a sense, she says, the end was no surprise; there had been conflicts from the moment Hanson learned, two months into the relationship, in the summer of 1987, that McInerney was not divorced, but merely separated, from his second wife, Merry. "By the time I found out," she says ruefully, "I was madly in love." Not only was McInerney black-Irish handsome, famous, and charming, he seemed to offer the ravaged twenty-four-year-old a new and desperately needed life after the razor-slashing street attack that had scarred her face and psyche, and destroyed her hopes of a modeling career. Indeed, the whole city had been buoyed by the romance; it seemed like a fairy tale.

By the spring of 1988, McInerney's marriage had erupted into a conflict of a different, more painful sort, when Merry, despondent in Michigan over her husband's romance with Hanson, attempted suicide and was committed briefly to an institution. What she needed, he felt, was the best place money could buy. The best place, friends counseled, was Connecticut's Silver Hill Hospital.

Merry remained at Silver Hill for nine months. Because her distress was emotional, not physical, insurance paid for only two weeks of that stay. McInerney paid for the rest. The bill ran to hundreds of thousands of dollars—a good part of the money he had made from his three novels as well as from his *Bright Lights* screenplay. For McInerney, always beguiled by the work and life of F. Scott Fitzgerald, this was a lot more Scott and Zelda than he'd ever wanted. For Hanson, left alone every weekend as McInerney went to visit Merry, it wasn't much fun, either.

In early 1989, Merry went back to Michigan, where she remains, leading a healthier life. As part of the divorce settlement, McInerney agreed to support her for a set number of years, a period that has not yet expired.

And then there were the endless temptations. "People were always wanting to sweep Jay away," Hanson explains, "and he was the sort of guy who gets swept up by everything he does—writing or partying. You'd get, not jealous, but tired after a while, tired of competing. Not only with the girls but the buddies. If I heard the names Morgan, Gary, or Jim . . ." Hanson rolls her eyes. "It was worse than hearing girls' names. 'Morgan—oh no!' Because I knew that meant he'd be home at four in the morning."

Soon after the trial of her attackers, Hanson enrolled at N.Y.U. After days spent in classrooms—a trial in itself, enduring the morbid curiosity of fellow students—she would come back with homework to do. McInerney, having spent the day writing, would want to go out, and, especially when the invitations were glamorous, Hanson felt torn. Even when she could balance both worlds, she didn't feel good. McInerney was older,

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and he had a career. He got paid to write film treatments; Hanson paid to write them at school. She adored McInerney's friends, but never forgot they were his; when she tried to introduce him to friends she was making, she felt his impatience was painfully clear.

In an effort to both deal with her lingering trauma and establish a life of her own, Hanson went on the lecture circuit, speaking to other victims of violent crimes. At first the speech-giving brought her satisfaction, as well as some money. Eventually she felt trapped by her role, not only reliving her pain but being defined by it—being, as one introducer put it, a "celebrity victim." Gradually, she began to feel more confidence in her film work, but McInerney seemed oblivious to that.

"The relationship was always tied into what had happened [the attack], because it started right after that. I always felt Jay saw me only in that light. Because he was around me every day, he didn't see the progress I was making. I would always be the way he met me in his mind. And when I started to make this film, he said, 'You're actually making a film?' I thought, What does he think I've been doing for four years in school?" Hanson shakes her head. "I adore Jay, and I loved being with him, and I thought he was a big influence on my life, but I always thought it wouldn't last. I needed to be with people who were on the same level as me, for my own self-assurance."

Last summer, McInerney tried to repair the damage by whisking Hanson off for a sybaritic summer in Italy, the Hamptons, the British Virgin Islands. It was a noble effort, but one hampered somewhat by the fact that he spent part of every day revising *Brightness Falls*, while she had little to do but read more of the serious novels McInerney, in Pygmalion fashion, was always passing her way. That October, when he spent a weekend on Long Island without her, Hanson assumed the worst and made the decision to leave. Despite a flurry of phone calls from the gang urging her to reconsider, she moved out of his apartment into a small sublet. In a way, the AWOL weekend was just an excuse. "I felt this was the year I had to really get over [the attack] and go on to something else. . . . And I think in a way Jay was a part of that."

At the same time, there was the real possibility the two might get back together. "I mean, we'd been talking about children and marriage." Hence the wait-and-see period, during which Hanson would finish her final fall term. "I took that very seriously," she says. "And it *was* an important time for me, although it was very painful. I just couldn't get out of bed—there I was where I'd been five years ago, lying in bed, watching the sun go up and go down."

More painful was the inadvertent discovery of McInerney's romance with Bransford. Hanson says she went through three torturous months, but has come to feel philosophical about it. "They're much more similar than Jay and I are. And Helen's got a big life, all that blueblood, high-society stuff. . ." But the notion that they might have kept their nuptials a secret provokes a wry smile. "You go to New York, to the justice of the peace, and invite Marie Brenner. . . you think no one is going to find out?" And the pain—of having, as she puts it, to clean up the mess—still obviously bothers her.

"You can't just bring someone new into your family and expect them to care about her and take someone away that they've been caring about for four years," she says. "And people have children who see you as a group, and you have to contend with that. 'Where's Marla?' They don't understand that. And you have a house, with all your stuff together. And there you are, cleaning up somebody else's clothes when they're living with someone else already. Packing his clothes boxes—he'd rented the apartment to someone else, and they're moving in, but there's still shoes on the floor and trash in the trash cans, dirty sheets on the bed. And you're standing there thinking, It's not really my job to do this, because it's not my house. But you can't let the people move into it this way." It takes a minute to realize why that speech sounds so familiar: it's so close to the second-person voice of *Bright Lights*.

Hanson says she hopes she and McInerney will be friends, but she isn't entirely sure he'll want to be. "In a strange way," she says softly, "I ended up on the other side, exactly where Merry was. He was reacting to me like he had reacted to Merry. And it didn't feel very good."

Though the Village apartment is gone, McInerney remains a part-time New Yorker, having moved his belongings into an apartment Bransford recently acquired on the Upper East Side. His friends see the change of address as symbolic, and McInerney, with some pride, agrees: the downtown kid has grown up. How long he and Helen will stick to their plan of keeping Nashville as home base is less clear. Already, McInerney is logging heavy frequent-flier miles, heading north at the drop of a dinner invitation. One night while he's in town we meet at the restaurant of his choice: not Odeon or Indochine, but "21."

It is, of course, the perfect choice. A throwback—almost a time machine—to the Jazz Age days of F. Scott Fitzgerald, when a writer could be the toast of the town, and Fifty-second was Swing Street. McInerney loves the history; he loves the clubbishness and snobbery too. A scene in *Brightness Falls* takes place in the restaurant's cavelike first-floor dining room, with careful reference to the tradition of honoring regulars by hanging appropriate toys from the ceiling: a toy boat for a shipping magnate, and so forth. When I suggest, over the din, that we take one of the tables in the quieter far corner, McInerney and the maître d' flash me the sort of pitying looks one reserves for the mentally enfeebled. The corner, McInerney explains, is Siberia; we sit instead at a little round table by the front door, the better to see and be seen.

"This used to be the refuge of people who grew up on Park Avenue, the place fathers always took sons when they came home from college, to have man-to-man talks," McInerney explains. The irony, as he freely admits, is that he wasn't one of them. In fact, he grew up in small towns all over New England, Canada, and Europe, the eldest of three sons of a paper-company executive who got transferred almost every year. As the perennial new kid—eighteen schools before college—McInerney sought out each next local library as a refuge, and nurtured outlandish dreams of being a writer too, a rich and famous writer in New York who would eat at "21." "My father always had business in New York, and he'd come back and tell me about this place that had hamburgers that cost twelve dollars," McInerney exclaims. "I couldn't believe it!"

The hamburgers cost $24.95 now, most of the entrées a good deal more than that. As for the wines, they seem to be priced in pesos. Unfazed, McInerney engages in earnest talk with the sommelier and selects a 1989 Puligny-Montrachet Les Perrières. In his years of success, he has become a raving oenophile, much to the exasperation of his friends. The wine talk seems terribly authoritative, but there is something a bit de trop about it—as, for that matter, there is about the all-Armani wardrobe. On some level, McInerney is still the wide-eyed boy from the provinces, marveling at big-city glamour and

plunging into it with innocent gusto—what George Plimpton calls "that wonderful exuberance and inability to go to bed."

For a while at Williams College, McInerney remained an outsider among preppier peers. But by junior year, when Gary Fisketjon transferred from the University of San Francisco, McInerney had established himself as the campus poet. "A number of people on the literary magazine told us we'd really like each other. Of course, as a result we hated each other," McInerney recalls. The tension intensified when both took an interest in the same coed. One night in the campus pub, Fisketjon breezed coolly by McInerney's table and flicked a lit cigarette into his pitcher of beer. "I think I got up to hit him, and someone stopped me, and then somehow by the end of the evening we were talking furiously about John Berryman. And then we were best friends."

Fisketjon, who'd grown up on a mink farm in Oregon, had no more acquaintance than his new friend with the New York publishing world, and yet both shared the same quixotic dream of conquering it someday. They read literary quarterlies and had late-night debates about new favorites, Raymond Carver among them. When McInerney's parents gave him a car for graduation, he and Fisketjon set off on a sort of faux-Kerouac cross-country journey. In Nashville, as it happened, they got conned by a guy who took their money to show them the sights; in Oxford, Mississippi, they slept in Faulkner's yard; in New Orleans, after a Willie Nelson concert, they saw a man killed in the parking lot. Which was why they decided to drive west through the night, and why, on too many stimulants and too little sleep, they got into the one real fight of their friendship. "We started arguing about Norman Mailer—I was pro, and Gary was con—and we started screaming at each other. We didn't come to blows, but it was pretty bad. We ended up pulling over to a rest stop and sleeping in the bushes."

As if on cue, Norman and Norris Mailer walk into "21" with another couple and take a table nearby. Warm greetings are exchanged; Mailer has been a friend and supporter since *Bright Lights,* and seems to have taken an old fighter's pleasure in watching the kid put up his gloves in the ring of literary celebrity. "My feeling is that young writers really have two choices," he remarks some days later. "One is the tower and the other is the media field. Jay's chosen the latter, which can be tougher, and I like that quality in him: he's saying, 'One reason to write *is* to be a public figure and have people feel a ripple of excitement when I come into the room, and I want that.' I think that's good. After all, novelists may soon become as recherché as poets—if there isn't some sense of excitement in being a writer, how many people will do it?"

By now we are on to a bottle of 1982 Pichon Lalande—and the McInerney story is assuming the scale of an epic. Like most writers, McInerney loves talking about himself, and, indeed, one learns over time that it's a struggle to get him to focus on anything else. But he does it with such childlike delight that his friends always seem to forgive him. And as he does, what comes clear is that at every stage he's asked himself: What would a writer do now? What would Hemingway do? Or Fitzgerald?

Which is why he thought, as his trip sputtered to an end in San Francisco, "O.K., I've done the Kerouac thing, now I'll do the Hemingway thing." While Fisketjon went through the Radcliffe Publishing Course (where he met Entrekin) and headed down to New York to take a first-rung job in publishing, McInerney drifted back East with the notion of getting a

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Jay McInerney

newspaper job. But a short stint on a New Jersey weekly proved disastrous—McInerney spent hours fashioning his leads but got his facts all wrong. When an old professor suggested he apply for a Princeton fellowship to write in Japan, McInerney leapt at the chance.

Japan was McInerney's Paris: the expatriate period punched on his literary ticket, and the basis for his second novel, *Ransom*. And as with all expatriates, there came a time when it seemed he must leave or not go back at all. With his imagination fired by almost daily letters from Fisketjon that conjured wondrous images of life in New York, the choice wasn't difficult to make. Even more eager to leave was McInerney's half-Japanese girlfriend, Linda Rossiter, a dark beauty who hoped to pursue an American modeling career. Before returning, McInerney married her. If he had thought the institution would bring him stability, he was mistaken. "Off we went, me to be the writer, she to be the model. Seemed like good work if we could get it." McInerney laughs. "Well, she got it, but I didn't!"

To pay the rent on his small downtown apartment McInerney put in time as a fact checker at *The New Yorker*, the memorable period that so enlivened *Bright Lights*. After he was fired—a precedent at the magazine, he says with some pride—McInerney turned for help to Fisketjon, who found him a job as a freelance reader for Random House. The payoff for a typically dreary day was, at least, an evening of downtown clubs with Fisketjon and sometimes Entrekin, sluiced by drinking and drugs. Perhaps because his friends had real jobs they cared about, McInerney was the one who seemed to have the most trouble keeping his appetites in check. When Rossiter flew to Milan for a fashion show and simply failed to return, his life seemed dangerously adrift. Once again, Fisketjon bailed him out—this time not with a job but with a savior—in a typical turn of McInerney drama.

"We'd been up late drinking the night before, and I was trying to write when Gary called to ask if I wanted to meet Ray Carver," McInerney recalls. "I thought he was kidding, and hung up on him. He called back and said, 'No, really, Carver's coming over to your house; he's here in New York with nothing to do for the afternoon, so I told him you'd show him around.' Suddenly the buzzer rings, and there's this big bear of a man who was one of my great heroes." The two talked for six hours, joined eventually by Fisketjon and Richard Ford, before heading uptown for Carver's reading at Columbia. Not long afterward, McInerney got a letter from Carver suggesting—not very gently—that if he wanted to get serious about writing he head up to Syracuse, far from the city's temptations, and become one of Carver's students. "It was lucky that I met him when I did," McInerney admits. "Not only because of where my life was, but because of where his life was. He was a guy just recovering from being an alcoholic, not yet a great American writer. Not long after, he had to close the door a bit."

There was no romantic literary model for the three years McInerney spent at graduate school in Syracuse, just a lot of hard work learning his craft. During that time, his mother died of cancer; not long after, he met Merry and began to work on *Ransom*. Not until the spring of 1983 did he knock off the short story that became the first chapter of *Bright Lights*, and then go on, in a feverish three-month burst of energy, to finish it. Three more months passed from the time he sent it to Fisketjon until the day, just before Christmas, when Fisketjon called to say that Random House would publish the book, and that, what was more, his boss, Jason Epstein, had suggested the standard first-novel advance of $5,000 be upped to $7,500. For the McInerneys, living at this point on a $6,500-a-year grant, that seemed an almost unbelievable sum of money. "That," says McInerney over the din of diners at "21," "was one of the happiest moments."

When the check comes at last, after two glasses of 1963 Taylor Port, it's so high I can only marvel: $448 for two people, before tip.

What a long, strange trip it's been.

One of the more striking ways in which *Brightness Falls* is different from *Bright Lights* is in the station of its characters. The clubgoers of *Bright Lights* are outside the kingdom—kids working at entry-level jobs. The somewhat older characters of *Brightness Falls* have made it in to grapple with the perils of success. Since *Bright Lights*, and to a considerable degree because of *Bright Lights*, their real-life counterparts have made the same trip.

Fisketjon, a rising young editor before *Bright Lights*, nevertheless has had a far more dramatic eight years because of the book than he might have without it—tapped first as editorial director of Atlantic Monthly Press, then, after a somewhat tumultuous tenure not helped by the critical failure of McInerney's *Story of My Life*, zigzagging to Knopf as a senior editor. Entrekin's debt to *Bright Lights* is less direct, but not that much so: the book's success paved the way for Bret Easton Ellis's *Less Than Zero*, which Entrekin published the next year. From Simon & Schuster he followed Fisketjon to A.M.P., forming his own imprint and remaining after his friend's departure. Last September, in a surprise move, he managed to raise the money to buy out the company. "At the time I was thinking of buying it, I called Jay and said, 'What do you think?' " Entrekin recalls with a grin. "He said, 'Damn it, everybody's going to think *Brightness Falls* is about that!' "

McInerney's own arc is harder to judge. *Bright Lights* remains so clouded by its subsequent hype that critics seem to remember it as some crassly commercial ploy, not a serious coming-of-age novel with modest expectations written by an unsophisticated out-of-towner who had to go with somebody cool to get into the Mudd Club, as McInerney puts it. For all the critics who panned his second and third novels, there are others who adored them—particularly in Europe, where McInerney is seen as issuing bulletins from the American pop-culture front. ("The farther you get from New York," declares agent Amanda Urban, "the higher the critical esteem in which he's held.") In the view of his peers, too, McInerney has done well; writers as diverse as Mona Simpson and Robert Stone treat him with serious respect (though Stone admits to marveling at the chasm of time between his own, politically charged literary youth in jeans and long hair and McInerney's in black-tie—a throwback indeed). And then there is his strongest literary supporter, Julian Barnes.

Barnes, with whom McInerney engages in a teasing one-upmanship by fax almost daily, comparing foreign-rights sales and fine wines imbibed the night before, calls McInerney his best American friend. But he adds, "I start from the position that he's a very serious writer. I thought *Bright Lights* was good—the second-person narrative and other elements were intriguing—but I couldn't tell. It was with *Ransom* that I could see he was a real writer—it showed range. Then I thought *Story of My Life* was his best book so far. It was taut and funny and nasty, with a perfect ear, which is one of the things about Jay. So it seems ironic and ridiculous to me that he's thought to have had a wonderful success with his first book, then a failure or two—to have had a Fitzgerald-like graph—when in fact I look at him and think he's an extremely funny, intelligent man and wonderful company



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Like certain other American writers—Ernest Hemingway and Irwin Shaw, to take two—McInerney has not been shy in taking on his critics in print or coming up with his own theories of what ticks them off. "I think there's a tremendous reverse snobbery that sophisticated New York media people have about the world in which they live," he says. "They think real fiction is about the American workingman, or about burned-out drunks in trailer parks. Real life isn't this life that we live; it's somewhere out there in the rest of America, or in Zimbabwe or somewhere. But this world is at the least no less interesting than, say, Gogol's bureaucrats or Carver's unemployed lumberjacks. To me, New York is the greatest living theater that there is."

Also, for a writer prone to temptation, the most dangerous. And that, more than critical fire, is what has put a wobble in McInerney's career arc. For eight years now, strangers have been pressing cocaine on him, literally slipping him foil-wrapped grams as they shake his hand—in nightclubs, on book tours and college campuses—just for the kick of partying, if only for a moment, with Mr. Bright Lights. Though he says drugs no longer hold much interest for him, he also says he has no regrets. "Yes, I have used virtually every kind of drug you can think of. And guess what? A lot of it was just plain fucking fun. And that's what some of the A.A. people forget. Hey, it wasn't just an escape; it was like sex. It had a lot to *do* with sex. It made it easier to sleep with a stranger—and more fun!"

McInerney says that, unlike the writer in *Brightness Falls*, he has never checked himself into a rehab center. He admits to being self-destructive, to having an addictive personality, to being a hedonist. But always, he says, just in the nick of time, he's managed to pull himself away from New York and write his way out of the pit. Even now, though, New York seems to hold the power to thoroughly disrupt him. "Does he realize that living in New York and being in the tabloids is not the greatest thing for a writer?" muses one older writer who's witnessed that power. "Does he know how difficult it is to sustain a career for twenty-five or thirty years? And how the celebrity machinery of this city grinds you down? Because the need to write is emotional, but so is the gratification you get from publicity. And the more you get from public recognition, the less need there is to write. The stuff drips out of the faucet."

So far, McInerney seems to think he can still do it all. But, as one friend suggests, part of Helen Bransford's appeal is the refuge Nashville offers from New York, and the steadying influence that one very grown-up southern lady can exert on her younger man. "Jay has sort of had a woman for each period of his life," the friend explains. "Linda was for the expatriate-in-Japan period, Merry was for the intellectually-making-it period, and Marla was for the fame period. So Helen? She's for the new, at-home, take-care-of-Jay, I-work-too-and-I'm-not-depressed period."

On a warm Saturday night in Nashville, McInerney and his not-depressed bride throw their light little dinner for ten: fried chicken, turnip greens, corn mash, potatoes with gravy, and fried corn bread, all courtesy of Mildred, the Bransford family's longtime cook and overseer. Morgan Entrekin is scheduled to come, but not untypically misses his plane in New York. A young record-company president arrives, along with one of the powers in country-and-western P.R., and, among others, Jimmy Buffett and his pregnant wife, Jane. It's all clearly emblematic of the new McInerney life—a nice southern evening at home, fine wine but no drugs, not even any margaritas. Buffett, in fact, is now something of a health nut, despite the musical tributes to drinking in Caribbean climes that continue to earn him millions on tour every year. Slimmed-down and balding, he wakes up at 6:30 every morning and hurries off to the gym. "But don't tell 'em that!" he says in mock horror. "Tell 'em I'm up drinking and doing drugs till four A.M.!"

Not too long ago, McInerney and his friends liked to call themselves the bad boys. But, like Buffett, they're mostly talk now, not much action. Fisketjon has been married, and a father, for years. Erroll McDonald is married, too, and says his greatest high is changing his baby's diapers. Now that McInerney is married again, Entrekin, the last prowler, says that he's lonely, but that he's working too hard keeping Atlantic Monthly Press afloat to do much dating or carousing.

It all sounds terribly mundane, of course. But, as McInerney is discovering in Nashville, there are certain trade-offs for giving up the clubs, and the drugs, and the girls. Like a wonderful wife, and happiness with her. For McInerney, voice of his generation, it all suggests something truly radical: growing up is . . . in! □

Carol Matthau

(Continued from page 166) been built around the search for Heathcliff, and her ultimate role model is Oberon's Cathy, because, she whispers, "in the bleakness of the moors, she's the light."

Bleakness is something she knows about from her early childhood; her first memory, she says, is of hunger. Though her mother, pregnant at sixteen, married a teacher (who was not Carol's father) before Carol's birth, she walked out on him after she brought her second daughter home from the hospital two years later. Writes Carol: "The man pointed at me and said, 'Now we can put that one up for adoption.' My mother said, 'Hold the baby just for a minute.' She got her coat and her purse and lots of blankets, wrapped me up, took the baby, left, and never went back." She consigned both children to foster homes, visiting them regularly, and then, after marrying the wealthy Charles Marcus, introduced them—first Carol, then eight, and about two years later Elinor—into his household. Marcus—by all accounts a compassionate, generous-spirited man—adopted both girls.

Years later, for the author's blurb on the dust jacket of *The Secret in the Daisy*, Carol would write, "All my life I have been preoccupied with the problem of not permitting myself to settle down into the comfort and convenience of being nobody, which has always scared me, and still does." The sentiment dates back, she says today, to those years shuttling among foster homes, in which she aspired "to total anonymity, because you didn't know these people, and life was full of dangers. . . . That's who I was, nobody. And having been nobody, I wanted to move away from that, from those shadows."

Rosheen Marcus, now eighty-four, remembers things a bit differently. A gravelly-voiced woman with a sparsely made-up, creaseless face and a doggedly unsen-

timental manner, she lives in a tidy one-bedroom apartment on Park Avenue adorned with family photographs and grand portraits which suggest the great beauty she was. "You know, she wasn't in so many of those foster homes," she says, adding that Carol spent much of that period with *her* mother, a White Russian who married a French concert violinist, and other relatives. "I'm too old to worry about what you're going to say about me, and I don't care.... But I'm just telling you now that's terribly exaggerated.

"I don't know why people like to disclose things about themselves," she continues, pondering the reason anyone would write an autobiography. Of her own history, she admits, "Even my children guess at a lot of things, you know." Most significant among these is the question of Carol's paternity. When I remark that Carol's real father must have been extraordinary, Rosheen, exhaling smoke, answers quietly, "He was...But I can't disclose that." In fact, Carol had always assumed that she shared a biological father with her half-sister and didn't know different until Elinor told her on the night before Carol gave birth to her first child. She says she has now given up questioning her mother on the subject. "You see, the reason I suppose that I didn't go after it was I had the most wonderful father who ever lived. And it was by his choice."

Charles Marcus, the man whom Carol still refers to as Daddy, was a dapper figure with an incisive mind, who oversaw technical innovations in aviation for Bendix and, later, Hughes Aircraft. Carol learned early that he respected intelligence, and she would memorize difficult words to impress him in conversation. "He was mad about her," recalls Elinor. "Intellectually, they had a thing going, and I couldn't get in there." Of Carol's relationship with their mother, whom she describes as a glamorous, couture-dressed creature out of a Kay Francis movie, Elinor says, "My mother lived through Carol. She was, I suppose, everything my mother would love to have been if she had had the opportunity to grow up in great wealth."

Both Rosheen and Carol say the bond between them was intense in those gloriously affluent years before Carol married in 1943. Rosheen separated from Marcus in the early fifties and went to live in Europe for many years, where she went through, Carol says, "lots and lots of beaux. And I always knew how much money they had by their height. She liked tall men.... If they were short, I knew they had billions." (Of one dandyish suitor Carol is said to have remarked, at a time when relations were tense, "I think he's trisexual—men, women, and my mother.") Though Carol remained close to Charles Marcus until he died at ninety-nine in 1983, Rosheen concedes her daughter has "kind of drifted away" from her in the succeeding years.

As a child, Carol says, she adapted quickly to the dazzling luxury of a fully staffed, eighteen-room flat. "You see, I never adjusted to the [poorer] beginnings—never." She attended the National Park Seminary in Maryland and the Dalton School in Manhattan, and with her white-skinned prettiness, startlingly exaggerated—even then—by makeup, the girl known among her friends as "Baby" became a much-photographed fixture at the New York debutante balls and the Stork Club. It was in this period that she met two girls, both born famous, with whom she would form lifelong friendships—the heiress and subject of America's most famous custody trial, Gloria Vanderbilt, and Oona O'Neill, the daughter of the playwright Eugene O'Neill. The relationship among the three beauties, over the years, has assumed mythic proportions, reaching a culmination in *Trio*, a book written in 1985 by Carol's son Aram Saroyan.

But the concept of a tightly bonded threesome is, Gloria Vanderbilt says, a fabrication. "Carol really invented that," she contends. "Because Carol and I were always the closest, closest friends. And she and Oona were very close. And Oona and I kind of looked alike. And she just sort of put it all together. I mean, I never really had a conversation with Oona of any depth.... It used to kind of annoy me, but I thought it gave Carol pleasure." "It is a myth," concedes Carol. "I don't know who created it.... The real story is, I was Gloria's best friend, and I was Oona's best friend, and neither was the other's best friend. I tried hard to smooth things over between them, but they had such different pursuits." Nonetheless, the parallels are striking. Each was haunted by a sense of fatherlessness—Gloria lost hers in infancy, and Oona was ignored by hers from adolescence on—and would go on to marry a much older, publicly acclaimed genius. Gloria, of course, wed Stokowski; Oona, Charlie Chaplin. But the first to claim her man of renown was Carol, who, at seventeen, met thirty-three-year-old William Saroyan on a trip to Los Angeles for Gloria's wedding to



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her first husband, agent Pat Di Cicco.

Saroyan was then at the peak of his celebrity, having recently won (and refused) the Pulitzer Prize for his play *The Time of Your Life* and consistently charmed the critics with his sparely rendered, sentimental evocations of his Armenian-American childhood. The pair were introduced by a celebrated Lothario, Artie Shaw, with whom the still-virginal Carol had had a brief, celibate fling. ("There were two people in my life like that," says Shaw. "Carol was one, Judy Garland was the other, both of whom were my dearest, beloved little girls.") In Saroyan, Carol felt, she had found her Heathcliff. "Before him, all I knew were just those really nice darling boys...great manners...all sort of the Eastern Seaboard elite. And they were very boring. Then when I met this man who looked just like a dark gangster, and he was so old, I thought, That's *wonderful*."

A year later, against her adoptive father's wishes, they were married. "Oh, Daddy just went crazy," says Rosheen Marcus. "But Carol said, 'Mother, if Daddy doesn't let me marry him, I'm going to kill myself,' and all that business. So I just went along with her." Gloria Vanderbilt says she had never seen anyone so much in love. "When Bill went overseas [in World War II], Carol was like Saint Sebastian with the arrows. She cried all the time."

Friends now say they could have predicted the marriage would be a disaster. Certainly, there were warning signs early on. Saroyan once broke off the engagement after receiving a series of cleverly worded letters—cribbed by Carol from love letters the young J. D. Salinger had sent to Oona O'Neill—which he felt destroyed his vision of an innocent, unaffected girl. And as Rosheen Marcus observes, "Bill didn't realize he was marrying a little debutante, who was very spoiled and didn't know anything about housekeeping or cleaning or things like that. He should have married a nice little peasant girl, you know." Nonetheless, Carol worked hard to comply with Saroyan's expectations, even becoming pregnant before their marriage to assure him that she was fertile. "That was the one thing that got Oona," she says. "But when you love someone that way, you can make a logic for anything." She bore him two children—Aram, in 1943, and Lucy, in 1946—and cloistered herself with him in a two-story house in San Francisco, scrubbing floors and doing the laundry while he worked upstairs. Visitors were not encouraged. Elinor Pruder remembers visiting them at that time and being asked to leave the house, "because I made scrambled eggs and put too much milk in them or something. And he said, 'That's it. Out.' "

People who saw the couple together describe Carol with the same adjectives: quiet, timid, frightened. Carol speaks of Saroyan today as a man given to sudden, explosive rages and financially devastating bouts of gambling. "I always knew that he loved me as much as he could love. But then, it's true that to have *him* love you is like saying the SS men want you." He was, she continues, "a victim of his distrust. The more he loved me, the more he had to hate me. He hated that feeling that he had to have me." She was, she feels, merely a "prop" in his life. She remembers sneaking in to read his journals every morning when he went to the bathroom, and discovering "the biggest shock of my life. It was completely falsified and made up. With him as the hero, of course.... This great man in this horrible world."

That is more or less the take provided by Saroyan himself in the novels and essays he wrote about Carol from the fifties on. In them, he presents a downtrodden, hardworking artist striving for the tolerance of a shallow, superficial wife, who pines for pretty dresses and fancy friends and is desperate to be told she is loved. Carol acknowledges the truth of the latter part of the description—she remains a woman in endless search of approbation and is known to ask her friends repeatedly if they love her, if she looks pretty, if she did the right thing. But the rest of Saroyan's version she firmly denies. He was, she says, "a serious liar."

Saroyan would level the same accusation at Carol, and there is, throughout his writings, the cryptic suggestion that he was deceived by her in some unspeakable way. This appears to be rooted in the fact that she told him—in bed—she was Jewish after they had been married for years, at a time when Saroyan was hounding her to have another child. An inveterate anti-Semite, Saroyan, Carol writes, ripped the covers from the bed and said, "You're a Jew bastard?...I don't believe it. Look how perfect you are, all white and pink like a rosebud."

Carol finds it difficult to believe that Saroyan could *not* have known she was Jewish. And she disputes Saroyan's biographers' contention that this was the principal reason he left her. It was, she says, much more simple than that: "I began to disagree with him.... Before, I couldn't think of anything good enough to say to him. And, you know, a man loves a woman who doesn't speak. I suddenly had a few things to say, and he went all to pieces." When he divorced her, in 1949, she was twenty-four years old.

Less than two years later, Saroyan began courting Carol again. She had become involved with a married man in New York she identifies in her book only as "the artist" (because, she says, his widow is still alive), who had taught her love could be more, well, fun than she had suspected, and she resisted her ex-husband's overtures. Artie Shaw, whom Saroyan asked to be the matchmaker, remembers the reunion he set up in Carol's New York apartment. "He was sitting with her, and she was looking frightened as hell.... Bill was deaf, you know, so he talked in a very loud, gruff voice, and he's yelling, 'I love you, goddammit, I love you.' And I said, 'Bill, Christ Almighty, your words say, I love, and your voice says, I hate.' "

Still, for reasons she cannot fully explain to herself, she did remarry Saroyan, an event heralded with a splendid star-studded party given by the Chaplins in Los Angeles. The marriage lasted barely six months. Before she walked out on him, she says, she became the ultimate wife, making his life as nearly perfect as it could possibly be. It was, she says, the "only really calculated terrible act of my life."

Though she was supporting two kids (Saroyan's child-support payments were erratic, and she had refused alimony), Carol blossomed in her unmarried years. She landed parts in plays on Broadway, published a novel and a short story, and hung out with Capote, Gloria Vanderbilt, and the young Kay Kendall, whom she'd met on a trip to London and whose courtship by Rex Harrison she helped engineer. And she was certainly no longer silent.

Maureen Stapleton describes the shock of hearing provocative obscenities delivered in this "exquisite, sweet tone." Carol herself confirms a memorably salty encounter with Lawrence Langner, the very proper head of the Theatre Guild, at a dinner party. Langner, she says, "was boring Laurence Olivier to death. And, of course, I was with Olivier. He was Heathcliff, my God; I loved him more than life. And I could see that he was bored. So I said [a high, fluty voice], 'Oh, Mr. Langner, show us your dong.' And Olivier was *thrilled*. Mr. Langner was not thrilled at all. He never spoke to me again."

Other men, however, found the effect

entrancing. "She was very good with boys," says her longtime friend Leila Luce, the wife of Henry Luce III. "I remember there was this terrible boy in California, going on and on about how wonderful he was, how rich, how famous, how talented. . . . And Carol just said, 'And what else do you do?' " Luce also recalls that once, when she was visiting Carol, Frank Sinatra called at two in the morning to invite her to a party in his hotel room. "I don't believe it," Carol said after the speaker identified himself. "Let's hear you sing."

Two other men, both married, were accorded more attention. Of the writer James Agee, whom she met in the early fifties while still in California, she says, "I don't think anybody ever loved me that much." In her book, she describes how he learned to play her favorite Mozart piano concerto for her birthday present and encouraged her in her writing. Nonetheless, she says that because Agee had a heart condition and she was afraid he'd die in bed with her she never slept with him.

Nor, she swears, was her relationship with the English critic Kenneth Tynan—whose first words to her, she says, were "Will you come to England and marry me?"—ever consummated, even though the pair traveled in Europe together and shared a bed. "Walter didn't quite believe that I hadn't," she says ingenuously. "He said to Shirley MacLaine, 'Do you know what a liar Carol is to tell me she never actually really had an affair, although she'd been in bed with Kenneth Tynan?' And Shirley MacLaine said, 'She's not lying. That's the very same thing that I did.' I really had a love for him. And he was funny. But in a dark room, I don't know . . . something in me said, 'Uh-uh.' There was just a feeling you were going to invade new territory."

She very happily, however, bedded a third married man—Walter Matthau, a rising Broadway actor she met when they both appeared in George Axelrod's *Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?* in 1955. "I liked the way she said the word 'fuck,' " recalls Matthau. "She used the word, which was intriguing for a naïve young man, because girls who would use it would obviously be easier to fuck. And she pronounced it f-o-c-k, so that gave it a little class." In turn, Carol, who says she had no intention of remarrying after the Saroyan debacle, saw in Walter the perfect one-night stand, something which dissolved into a four-year-long affair before he finally divorced his wife.

"Everything about her was pleasant, amusing," says Matthau. "Except her



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makeup, which was a constant obstacle course. I used to go home with it all over my clothes and all over my face. I think once, at two o'clock in the morning, I walked past a couple and they jumped back in fright, seeing this white makeup on this maniac man walking down the street." It is a habit, he notes mournfully, she has persisted in. "Why does she put it on as if she were doing a takeoff on Marcel Marceau?" he asks, adding simply, "I think she wants to be noticed."

Carol married Walter Matthau in 1959, thus institutionalizing what Lillian Ross calls "one of the great love stories of the century." The marriage has survived the heady ups and downs of his career in Hollywood, his life-changing heart attack in 1966, her years-long struggle with malabsorption, and their respective addictions to shopping (Tiffany's is her favorite store) and gambling, two things she believes are cyclically interlocked. That she twice married gamblers still baffles her. "I guess it's because they're thumbing their nose at a moneyed society and the Establishment."

From the mid-sixties into the early eighties, Walter Matthau reaped millions (as well as an Oscar and two additional nominations) as one of Hollywood's top comic actors in such films as *The Odd Couple*, *Kotch*, and *The Sunshine Boys*. Much of his wealth, sighs Carol, went straight to the bookies, and she made a point of buying houses (in addition to the Pacific Palisades place, they own homes in Connecticut and Malibu), because "they aren't liquid." Walter's gambling, she says, has confirmed her long-held belief that there is no such thing as "security." She adds proudly that she has never had a savings account. Only once did she manage to save money on her own—$40,000, which she kept in a safe-deposit box. One afternoon, when she opened it to put in more money, she found it was empty except for a picture drawn by Matthau "of somebody crying, and at the bottom it said, 'Sorry, Darling.' "

Watching a basketball game, on which he's placed a bet, in the kitchen ("I picked every winner today, but my bookie's out of town, so I can't bet any good amount"), Walter Matthau talks about his marriage. "I'm a total male chauvinist," he says. "I want my wife to be the prettiest girl in the world and have this beautiful little apron, bakin' me a wonderful pie." He says he could never leave her, because "she always surprises me," adding, "She has an unusual slant, and it changes. One minute she's Marie Antoinette, the next she's Madame Defarge, planning the revolution."

Elinor Pruder, who was with the couple on location for *Pirates*, explains why there was no thought of flying Carol to an American hospital even when she appeared to be seriously ill. "If Carol had left, Walter would have left. He's her shadow. You know how he comes across. But Carol is the strong one." Carol agrees that her primary role is to be Walter's adoring, and sustaining, wife. "I guess I'm of the generation that still believes in that, because that's how you achieve love. And you can't achieve it by making a man miserable." She adds of her husband, "I can still feel that first love. Because his duality is just the opposite of Saroyan's: Saroyan was magnificent in the living room and a horror upstairs. Whereas Walter is the most romantic man, and that's what makes things so beautiful to me in bed."

Correspondingly, she admires Gloria Vanderbilt as "the most romantic person I know...she aspires to be in love all the time." But she admits that with Oona Chaplin—who consecrated her life to her husband, Charlie—"the price was too great." "Oona was one of the most brilliant people in the world," says Carol of her friend, who died last September. But after Chaplin, who was thirty-six years Oona's senior, died in 1977, his widow was left with a vacuum in her life she chose never to fill, instead numbing her grief with alcohol. Oona had never been more than a social drinker before, says Carol, but she acquired the dependency during the period of Chaplin's final illness, when she would wake him every hour and a half to take the meticulous, dignified man, who was scared of incontinence, to the bathroom. "What would you do if you had to get up every hour and a half? You couldn't take sleeping pills. You'd take a swig of scotch. And that was the beginning of it." Still, says Carol, her friend never seemed less than piercingly lucid to her. And in the last weeks of Oona's life, she would help Carol edit her autobiography on the phone. Carol's voice wavers when she speaks of Oona. "When Oona died, I began talking to her: 'How could you? How could you go? Where are you?' "

Discussing Oona's conflicted relationship with her children, Carol writes in her memoirs, "I think the notion that children are your life is the biggest myth in the world. They're not. Love is your life." Her own experience with motherhood has been complicated. While she has sustained a close and loving relationship with her son by Matthau, Charlie—the twenty-nine-year-old director, who lives next door to the couple and who describes his mother as "always my best friend"—she has not spoken to her children by Saroyan, Lucy and Aram, in more than two years.

Carol will say only that she did the best she could in raising them under strained circumstances, and that she and Walter gave them extensive financial and vocational support until they were well into their forties; finally, she says, their demands became "impossible." She adds succinctly, "The children you're asking me about are not children. They're people in their mid-forties. And I don't like them. And the reason I don't like them is they don't like me. And I really don't like anyone who doesn't like me."

When her mother's statement was read to her, Lucy, an actress and journalist, responded, "I love my mother very much. I've always wanted her to love me as well." Aram, who collaborated closely with his mother to create *Trio* in the mid-eighties and who, in his autobiographical *Last Rites*, refuted his father's long-running vilification of her, would not comment.

Elinor Pruder believes the gap was created, in part, by the fact that her half-sister is "still carrying that little girl Carol inside of her, and she tends to protect that little girl." While she thinks Carol worked hard at playing the conventional mommy, she was too exotic to fit the role, something Pruder believes baffled Lucy and Aram. (This was obviously compounded by their father's ongoing diatribe against her.) She adds hesitantly, "I think, to begin with, having a mother that's as glamorous as Carol...and having a family that are well-off—they don't even realize it, but come on, the Matthaus are very well-off...I think there's always resentment, hostility, demands made from one's children."

Nonetheless, Carol's friends describe her as a woman of unstinting beneficence. "She creates an atmosphere around her that's...*loving*," says Maureen Stapleton. "And she's so generous it's ridiculous.... She makes it seem like you're doing her this great favor to take this mink coat off her back." Artie Shaw adds that, above all, "Carol is a person who needs to be loved. She gives a lot of herself."

When Saroyan was writing his "Carol" books, his publishers would send her material they feared was libelous. She had a form letter she sent

right back. It read: "Be my guest." Similarly, when the notorious "La Côte Basque" chapter of Capote's *Answered Prayers* was published, she did not—unlike many of the other real-life characters portrayed in the story—feel she had been betrayed, although she admits she never really said any of the things Capote attributed to her. "But he told me what they were, and I said, 'Oh, well, I would have said them, if I had known.'... Anyway, he said I had skin like a gardenia, and I felt like a princess.

"Writers write," she continues. "They write lies; they write it the way they see it. Or the way they want to see it. Or maybe the way they want other people to see it.... I don't take it too seriously." Now, of course, she is presenting the world with a Carol Matthau's–eye view, and—while her book includes a chapter on the importance of "civilized lies"—she swears that everything in it is true to life, at least as she remembers it.

She told me these things on our one day together outside of her Pacific Palisades home. She had had to attend a ladies' Valentine's Day luncheon given by Barbara Davis, the wife of tycoon Marvin Davis, at the Bistro Gardens in Beverly Hills at the ungodly hour of noon. "Can you believe it?" she had complained to me the night before. "I might as well start getting dressed now." I had waited for her in the restaurant for a good forty-five minutes, while a procession of leggy females—Sherry Lansing, Cristina Ferrare, Jaclyn Smith, Audrey Wilder, among them—filed past, in a numbing series of variations on the short, streamlined power suit. Then there was Carol. In a deep-pink pantsuit, a straw hat wreathed in artificial roses, red high-heeled boots, carrying a heart-shaped red straw bag. (Valentine's Day and Halloween, she had told me earlier, are "my days.")

She said she hadn't slept much the night before. She seldom does, since that is when she writes, rehangs the pictures in the house, calls her friends in other time zones, or just stares at the ceiling and arranges her thoughts. But she seemed focused, in her typical fragmented way, as we browsed for an hour in Tiffany's—where she was greeted by the staff like Dolly Levi entering the restaurant in *Hello, Dolly!*—and cruised the designer boutiques on Rodeo Drive, where she gravitated toward anything frilly and pastel.

As usual, she was full of things to tell me, stopping periodically to ask if she was really giving me what I wanted, or on what days—in the times I'd seen her—I thought she'd looked prettiest. I learned

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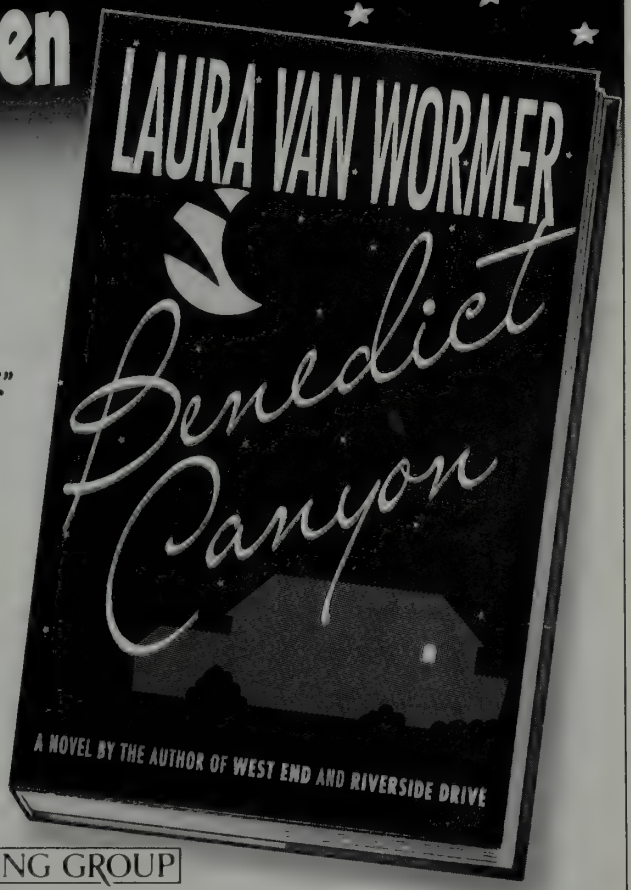
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Carol Matthau

about the unanswered letters she writes daily to Gorbachev, one of her heroes, and her obsession with spies. (The license plate of her Rolls Silver Shadow reads "MI6," and she is finishing up a book on Admiral Wilhelm Canaris, the head of German intelligence during World War II and a man she firmly believes was a double agent who changed the course of history.) They interest her because "they make a commitment to a vacuum."

By the end of the day, she was visibly flagging, and I was relieved when she announced that her husband had asked if I would drive her home in her car, because "Walter worries I'll fall asleep at the wheel." But when we got to the Rolls, she slid into the driver's seat. I think I screamed when the car lurched onto Wilshire Boulevard, because she looked at me and said plaintively, "You don't trust me, do you? They've gotten to you. They've reached you."

It was a memorable ride. We drove most of the way down Sunset Boulevard in the middle lane, because, she explained, "it's the best place to be. That way they can't ambush you." As the car moved along convulsively, she conceded, "The only one who thinks that I'm a superb driver is Maureen [Stapleton], because she's absolutely drunk to the gills. . . . Yes, driving in bumps. Walter criticizes that, too. But I mean, as a danger, I don't think there's a problem." We reached Pacific Palisades uneventfully; no one had even honked at us.

Carol Matthau will tell you that though she's never moved fast, or in a straight line, she nearly always reaches her destination. She regrets that she'll never make it to the moon, the place Truman Capote once told her she must have come from. But she plans, before she dies, to spend a long time on the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

"I'll go back and forth as many times as I want. And I'll take a lot of peanut butter, and Walter's old sweaters, and just sit and look out the window. And see all that space, that snow, that ice, that *lace*." □

Bull Rush

(Continued from page 160)

["*Aaurgh, aaurgh, aaurgh!* A little dolphin lingo there, for dolphin lovers in the audience."]

"Let's review what I said—this is a great day! What I have said about dolphins! People say, 'Gee, if we were only smart enough to understand the dolphin, the smartest animal on the planet.' See, we're the dunces of the planet, according to animal-rights environmentalist wackos. The dolphin, he's the smartest—if we could just follow his example. The dolphin is clean and pure as the wind-driven snow.

"So, yesterday, *The New York Times* science section writes: 'As much as puppies, or pandas or even children, dolphins are universally beloved. They seem to cavort and frolic at the least provocation, their mouths fixed in what looks like a state of perpetual merriment, and their behavior and enormous brains suggest an intelligence *approaching that of human beings or even, some might argue, surpassing it.*'

"Could somebody please show me one hospital built by a dolphin? Could somebody show me one highway built by a dolphin? Could somebody show me one automobile invented by a dolphin? I am offended—I'm serious about this."

But vengeance is mine, saith Rush. The *Times* article reports that researchers off the coast of Australia have come across male dolphins engaged in very chauvinistic behavior toward female dolphins, an activity called "herding." "The males will chase after her, bite her, slap her, hit her with their fins, slam into her with their bodies. In other words, Mike Tyson behavior rules and dominates the male dolphin population, at least off the coast of Australia. . . Ho ho! Imagine!

"Born free, as free as the wind blows. . ."

Rat-tat-tat-tat-tat!

And so it goes, until by the end of three hours various icons of the "dominant liberal media culture," human and otherwise, have been slain, at least in the world of Limbaugh, at least for this day.

The question hanging in the air after Limbaugh signs off is, What has he wrought? Nothing much more than some harmless show biz, he protests, saying that his chief purpose is to build and sustain such a large audience that he can "charge advertisers confiscatory rates."

"It's entertaining and spontaneous and it's good radio," says call screener James Golden, known as "Bo Snerdley" in the Limbaugh cast. "The politics on this show are secondary to his personality."

Others aren't so sure. Whether in clown or discourse mode, Limbaugh is effectively communicating a sharply defined political point of view to millions of listeners for fifteen hours each week, and there is no rebuttal, no debate. "That is precisely the point," argues Ted Koppel. "There is absolutely no one and nothing else out there like him, anywhere else on the political spectrum."

Politicians certainly felt Limbaugh's influence in the crucial weeks before the New Hampshire primary, when Pat Buchanan's challenge to George Bush was an as yet untested proposition. Limbaugh, a good Republican, had been a staunch supporter of Bush's, even though he thought the president had sold out conservatives with compromises on the deficit bill and on civil-rights legislation ("the quota bill"). But then a caller changed his mind; Limbaugh decided that a Buchanan vote in New Hampshire might be just the thing to retrieve George Bush from moderation, and he urged New Hampshire voters to pull the Buchanan lever.

On the campaign trail in New Hampshire, Buchanan heard about Limbaugh's endorsement within a matter of minutes and cannily sought to exploit it. He telephoned Limbaugh a couple of times from his campaign bus (which Limbaugh mentioned on the air). And at a rally in Atlanta, Buchanan told the cheering crowd, "Rush Limbaugh does a terrific job on radio. I'll tell you this: he is really the voice of Middle America. And I say, I've only given away one job, and Rush Limbaugh's gonna be director of communications in Pat Buchanan's White House!" Limbaugh delighted in that tape, playing it several times over the next few days.

If Limbaugh didn't exactly hand the nomination to Buchanan, he helped the former commentator deliver his conservative message to Bush. There are those in the president's camp who thought so, anyway; when Limbaugh was going full-guns against Bush on the air every day, some of Roger Ailes's pals at the White House called him and said, "What's Rush doing? He's killing us out there!"

"He has a microphone and 450 stations attached to it," says Buchanan. "I think a guy like Rush can influence decisions. And the reason is, Rush's information base is a lot broader than almost all of his listeners'. He reads well, he reads deeply, and so they sort of trust him in his judgment."

"If Limbaugh were more evil, he could

Bull Rush

do great damage," says Jeff Greenfield, and it's something Limbaugh considered when he went national four years ago. He made it a fast rule not to involve himself in causes and crusades, which he figured would be the death of his show. "This program exists in the entertainment arena," he said, "and I want it to stay that way." Yet he hasn't been able to fully resist the temptation to pull up to the table and play; not only did he hurl himself into the Republican primary battles, but when the congressional check-bouncing "cover-up" broke in March, he went on the air and gave out the House phone number, urging his listeners to call and demand disclosure of the check bouncers. (Speaker Tom Foley folded to public pressure and agreed the next day to make the names public.)

A subtler sign of Limbaugh's impact is his growing profile in the news media. When ABC's *Nightline* did a segment on the environment recently, the producers invited Senator Al Gore to flog his new book, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit*. Gore sounded his warning that "we now face a global ecological crisis that is more serious than anything human civilization has ever faced." But Limbaugh was invited, too; his message that "there is no ozone hole over the United States," and that the "crisis" has been manufactured by "the doomsday industry, typified by members of the Hollywood acting community who say that we've only got ten years left," was treated with equal weight. It was a major breakthrough for Limbaugh, whose views, in another time, from another source, might have been regarded as the latest rantings of the Flat Earth Society.

"Certainly, what I intended by that was an acceptance of what he clearly has become over the last two or three years," says Koppel, "and that is something of an icon to millions of conservative listeners around the country. He is not simply someone who acts, as most of us in the media do, as an intermediary between the listener/viewer and the guest. He doesn't have guests. He is his own personality. He is the show. And I think it would be too easy to dismiss him as being frivolous, and too easy to dismiss him as being irrelevant to the shaping and making of opinion in this country today.

"He's very smart, he does his homework. He is well informed. And you ignore him at your peril."

"I've never been to the Hamptons. I couldn't get to the Hamptons if I had a map."

Another day of Excellence in Broadcasting has concluded and Rush Limbaugh is back in the real world, at his desk in New York, a place, he is remarking, that is slow in yielding the human rewards commensurate with the most listened-to talk-show host in America. Bill Bennett is a pal; Pat and Bill Buckley have had him over for a dinner party. Yet he is not invited to those gossip-page soirées that members of the media royalty ceaselessly seem to attend. He belongs to no club, no crowd. New York's a lonely town when you're the only right-wing boy around.

It wasn't like this in Sacramento—Limbaugh owned the place before coming to New York in 1988 for his shot at the big time. "It's like starting all over," he says. "I mean, it's worse than starting all over, because the stakes are higher than they've ever been. And it took me a while to adjust to being a nobody. I mean, a literal nobody."

He is handed a telephone message from his business partner, Ed McLaughlin. Limbaugh calls him back.

"He was?" Limbaugh says excitedly into the phone. "Does he know who I am? Boy! Terrific!"

Peter Jennings has accepted an invitation to have lunch with Rush.

"McLaughlin said, 'He's a big fan of yours,' " Limbaugh reports. "It surprised me that he knows who I am. I'm surprised that anybody in New York knows who I am."

Other signs of success have come more quickly. In the four years since he went national, Limbaugh has become a one-man industry, earning nearly $1.7 million last year in salary (including deferments), personal appearances, and merchandising of such items as Rush T-shirts and coffee mugs. He relishes his circumstances with the particular zeal that often accompanies new wealth. He loves indulging his staff, picking up the $38,000 tab for a thank-you cruise and slipping them gifts individually. Before a recent trip to New Orleans with McLaughlin and two executives from his syndicator, Limbaugh ordered each of them a Rolex watch. He didn't know how exactly one settled a $33,000 jewelry bill and was tickled to discover that a phone call to his banker was all it took.

But always close to the surface are lingering doubts. "I have not changed a thing about my self-perception," Limbaugh says. "I still get up and read the New York papers and see my name not mentioned and think I'm a failure, that I'm not mattering, that nobody knows who I am in the city I live in, and it bugs me greatly. I just sit here and get depressed."

"The truth is, he becomes a different person when he's on [the air]," says his younger brother, David, a lawyer. "I didn't even know he had a passion for politics. I didn't know he had a sense of humor, either. I was always the clown, and he was quiet. He was shy, but radio has allowed him to come out of his shell. Why does a person who's ordinarily quiet become comfortable when he's talking to 11 million people, unless it's that they're invisible? But he changes when the mike goes off." Mr. Bombast exists only in EIB. Off the air, Limbaugh nurses a fundamental insecurity, rooted in a personal history that is the source of both his stage bluff and his beliefs.

He grew up in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, a small town a hundred miles down the Mississippi River from St. Louis, where his father's people were lawyers and established Republicans. His grandfather was Eisenhower's ambassador to India, his uncle a Reagan-appointed federal judge, and his father a local pillar. His parents named him Rush Hudson Limbaugh III, but back home he was—and still is—known as Rusty, a pudgy kid with a flattop who craved popularity but never penetrated the in-crowd.

"He had interests that he could develop all by himself," says Limbaugh's best friend from high school, Craig Valle. "You would find him in his dark bedroom playing with his tape recorder and radio." He didn't date, he didn't have a girlfriend, he didn't hang out. The youth revolution of the sixties that swept up many of his generation passed Rusty Limbaugh right by. "To this day, I do not own a pair of blue jeans," he says.

When he was sixteen, Limbaugh borrowed money from his father to go to Dallas for a six-week course that would earn him a broadcaster's license. His father owned an interest in the local radio station, and used his influence to get Rusty a job as a D.J. after school. "I loved music, plus I wanted to be popular," Limbaugh remembers. "I have no problem admitting this. And I thought: Here I am, playing the music these people like; they can call me and make requests; I can be a source of happiness, a source of satisfaction—that will make me popular. It didn't. All it did was make people think that I walked the halls of high school as a stuck-up snob."

Rusty's mother, Millie, is a tall Arkansas native with an easy laugh, but his more rigid father was the center of that

Bull Rush

family. He is remembered as a man of substance and character. He was also reserved in showing affection, and opinionated. Craig Valle remembers hundreds of hours spent in the Limbaugh living room, listening to him hold forth. "We would get in these hour-long debates with Rusty's father about all kinds of issues. And we always thought it was real interesting because he was so conservative and so strict and had these strong right-wing views, and we had never heard a lot of that stuff before."

Rusty always took his father's position. "He idolized him, he wanted to be like him," Millie Limbaugh says.

When the inevitable rebellion came, it was in Rusty's refusal to become another Limbaugh member of the bar. He loved radio, he wanted that to be his career. To please his father, he enrolled at a local college, but after a mediocre year (and flunking Speech 101), he went home and with trepidation went to tell his father he was quitting school and taking a job as a D.J. in Pittsburgh. The elder Limbaugh responded by predicting his son's future.

"He sat down and gave me a list of things that would happen as a result," Limbaugh remembers. "I would never be able to maintain my social standing; I would never be able to maintain my friends, because I'd lose intellectual compatibility. And then he said, 'And you'll never be able to find a decent woman to marry, son. Because what woman wants to marry a man who can't support her?' And I said, 'Well, I don't want to marry a woman like that anyway.' I lied."

And so, in 1971, Rusty Limbaugh went out into the world determined to prove his worth to his father, and to himself. Three years later, he was back home, dejected, having been fired from jobs at two Pittsburgh stations. A year later, he landed a spot in Kansas City, where he married a secretary at the station named Roxie. That job lasted three years, twice as long as the marriage.

It had begun to seem that his father was right; Limbaugh was depressed by the insecurity and nomadic nature of the rock jock's existence, and so in 1978 he quit radio. His roommate worked in the front office of the Kansas City Royals, and he got Limbaugh a job in group sales. There he met his second wife, Michelle, ten years his junior, who was working her way through school as an usherette at Royals Stadium. Rusty's father thought he had gotten close to a real job this time, but he came to hate it; he was thirty-two years old and earning $20,000 a year arranging tickets for birthday parties.

So, in 1983, Limbaugh decided to take one last plunge into broadcasting, accepting a newsreading job at a Kansas City station. His inclination to slip commentary into his newscasts annoyed his bosses, but Bruce Marr, a broadcast consultant, saw potential in Limbaugh's irreverence, and recommended him to a station in Sacramento that had recently fired its controversial afternoon talk-show host, Morton Downey Jr. Rush and Michelle moved to California. It changed everything.

Downey had pushed the boundaries out pretty wide, leaving Limbaugh plenty of room to develop what quickly became the hottest act in the history of Sacramento broadcasting. Within a year he was a local celebrity—his picture was on billboards, he went on a diet for Nutri/System, the city magazine put him on its cover, he went to city-council meetings. He and Michelle bought a house and settled in. "It was the happiest I'd ever been," he says. "Sacramento was where I had the gang, where I had a group of friends, where I was as busy and active as I wished I had always been."

But it was not the big time. It happened that Bruce Marr also mentioned Limbaugh to Ed McLaughlin, former president of ABC Radio Network, who'd started his own syndication company, EFM Media Management, Inc. McLaughlin was more interested in putting together a buyout of Limbaugh's Sacramento station, but that deal fell through, and while he was in California, McLaughlin heard the show and saw the ratings numbers. After a dinner with Limbaugh, he was convinced he could go national.

Limbaugh came to New York on the Fourth of July 1988, and felt he'd descended into hell. He was a stranger in New York, and the city was gripped by its worst heat wave in decades. The national show had a rocky start, too. It began on only fifty-eight stations, most of them in small markets, where station managers got very nervous very quickly over listener complaints about Limbaugh's shtick. It came close to the panic point when the affiliate in South Bend, Indiana, notified McLaughlin that it was canceling the show; Limbaugh went on the air, told his listeners what was happening, and urged them to ask the station to give his show more time to prove itself. The station got so many calls from around the country that it relented.

And then suddenly everything clicked. By 1990, Limbaugh's station list was growing so fast that McLaughlin could pick and choose his affiliates. He figured it would peak at 350 stations; he has added 114 stations since then. Radio-station managers began seeing things they'd never seen before; having the Limbaugh program on the air could bring a weak station into instant dominance—meaning millions in advertising revenues. After buying Limbaugh, WWL in New Orleans leapt from seventh to the top of the ratings for that time period. Some music stations even changed their format to talk radio in order to mesh with Rush. Restaurants opened up "Rush rooms," annex dining rooms with the radio show piped in. Limbaugh's on-air success quickly spilled over to personal appearances, and his "Rush to Excellence" tours, forty-five of them last year, were instant sellouts.

In Missouri, Limbaugh's boyhood pal Craig Valle would listen to Rush on the radio and be transported back to those debates in the living room twenty-five years ago. "I think of his father all the time when I hear him," Valle says. Rusty Limbaugh, who wanted to be just like his father, had become his father, at least for three hours a day.

But even after making it in New York, he could not be sure of the elder Limbaugh's approval. "His dad was very serious," says Millie Limbaugh. "When he could hear him, he'd say, 'Why is he doing that silly stuff? Why doesn't he stay serious?' And I'd say, 'Because nobody would listen to him.' "

Michelle remembers that when Rush called his father to share some great new development he would come away deflated. "I would hate it every time he would get on the phone, because I knew when he got off he would be depressed or angry. Every time, every time. And I knew it was my job to cheer him back up again."

Limbaugh's father died in December 1990, and it wasn't until the very end that he realized his son hadn't come a cropper after all. The revelation occurred during Limbaugh's first *Nightline* appearance a month before, when he debated the Persian Gulf buildup with Mark Shields of *The Washington Post*. No jokes, just political hardball. Back home in Cape Girardeau, his father turned to Millie and said, "Where the hell does he get that from?"

"He never knew it came from him," says Limbaugh.

They now sell Perry Ellis and other designer labels at the Rochester Big and Tall Clothing store for men, where Limbaugh buys his clothes, but he wishes he

didn't have to shop there. He has gained one hundred pounds since coming to New York, and the weight issue is a sensitive one, despite his jokes about it. ("I remain overweight," he says, "because I know any woman pursuing me cannot be doing it for anything other than love.")

Limbaugh's obesity has in fact dire potential. His father was also overweight, as is his brother, David, and both sons inherited from their father a tendency to diabetes. While it can be controlled by diet, it can be fatal if it is not controlled; Limbaugh's father couldn't keep his weight down, and died from it. "He's just his dad made over," Millie Limbaugh says. "And I don't understand, because I don't know how he has time to eat, except in the evenings."

Limbaugh knows he has to lose the weight, but somehow he just can't. "It's unhealthful, this size," he says one night over a steak dinner at "21." "It's hard on the heart, and it also prevents me from doing some things I'd like to do. I'd love to play golf again, I'd love to pick it up. [But the weight] messes up the swing—stomach's in the way. I'd love to play touch football again." When Rush and Michelle came to New York, she tried to get him to walk to work, but he'd get halfway and take a cab. "He doesn't like exercise; he doesn't like to sweat," she says.

He has tried nine different kinds of diets. "I've lost ninety pounds twice, sixty pounds two or three times, forty pounds a bunch of times. And I've done every diet there is. I've done Weight Watchers, I've done Nutri/System, I've done the lo-carbo, I've fasted." He hired a personal trainer from Body by Jake, and bought a treadmill that he was actually beginning to use. But he stopped exercising when his father died.

"I want to [diet] one more time, and that's it. I don't want to yo-yo. I intend to lose it. I've got to find the diet. I have a feeling that the low-fat regimen is going to be the key. You learn so much about diets. I probably would weigh forty pounds less if I hadn't done all the yo-yo dieting. They say that each time you go on a low-calorie diet your body says, 'All right, asshole, fine, starve me. You start eating again and I'm gonna make sure you get fat.' "

It is hard not to suppose that Limbaugh's size has affected his intimate relationships, which have not been smooth. He is inclined to stay at home when he's not working, and that hasn't helped. "I'll tell you, Rush is a couch potato, he's laid-back," says his mother. His marriage to Michelle began to break up almost as soon as they arrived in New York. "There were signs during the Sacramento years that it was not the best of marriages," Limbaugh says, "but we thought we were doing all right at working it out. Moving to New York..."

Michelle says that at first Rush thought she'd found another man, "but it really had nothing to do with it. It was coming to New York, and being by ourselves, the two of us. We just didn't have a whole lot in common." They were divorced two years ago, and Michelle remarried in September. "Since I've been away from Rush, people have wanted to know where I get all this energy," she says. "I've learned how to ski, to windsurf, Rollerblade. I'm very athletically active, I like to do a lot of cultural things, I like going to the museums. You know, Rush was never one to go to museums."

As for Rush, bachelorhood has not been very exciting. "I'm not dating anybody. Relationships are fantasies to me now," he jokes. "For most guys, strange, perverted sex is their fantasy. For me, just having a relationship is a fantasy." After the breakup with Michelle he did have a brief flirtation with Sydney Biddle Barrows, the former society procuress, whom he had met at a game-show audition. They had dinner with a group of people in Los Angeles, and afterward Limbaugh often talked about her on the air. "Apparently, he took a shine to me," says Barrows. "But he's never called me. I haven't heard word one from the man. I said, 'Uh-hum, all talk, no action.' Unfortunately, I'm seeing somebody now. But I really was interested."

Limbaugh says he never got a signal from Sydney and he needs a very *strong* signal. "I don't know if I should tell you this. I have a...I think it's something to do with my weight, something to do with my memories of high school and so forth. I have this ...it's a block. When I hear that women are interested in me, I don't believe it."

But Limbaugh has no trouble with the guys. Despite the fact that his show is on in the middle of the day, men compose the heart of his audience, 55 percent of the key twenty-five- to fifty-four-year-olds who listen. It's a guy thing.

The first time Peggy Noonan heard of Limbaugh was last summer when she was a guest speaker at an Arizona Republican Party function. She was chatting with Arizona's secretary of state, a fortyish man, when one of his young male aides came bounding over, eager to repeat the latest impertinent Limbaugh hilarity.

"And they savored what he had said,"

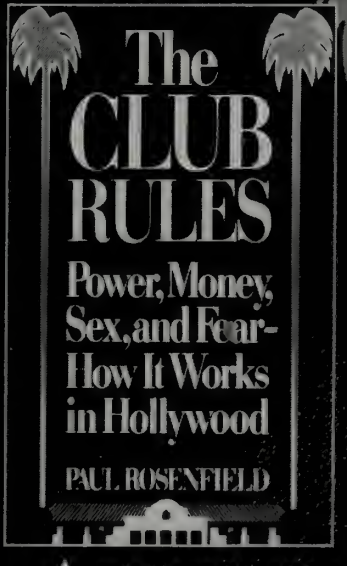
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Bull Rush

Noonan remembers, "and they compared great Rush comments and observations from the previous weeks as if they were collecting them. And from that simple moment, this nice twenty-five-year-old, testosterone-energized political kid talking to this forty-year-old, equally testosterone-crazed rising political star, I got very much the impression that Rush has a following of American men. And he is speaking to them in a way that they have hungered for someone to talk to them about politics. He is filling a void that maybe nobody quite knew existed."

It's not surprising that many women just don't get the Limbaugh phenomenon; in the gender war being waged in the American culture, Rush Limbaugh is the General Schwarzkopf for the boys' side. The divide was neatly demonstrated when Limbaugh appeared recently on *CBS This Morning*. Co-anchor Harry Smith, a white-bread man, beamed all morning as he promoed the Limbaugh segment, and when interviewing Limbaugh he told him that, even though he sometimes wonders about his politics, "I listen a lot, and I think, Funny, witty, caustic, which I really like." Earlier in the show Smith had shown a clip in which Limbaugh, appearing before a live audience, told a true story about a group of women who had fought for and won admission into an all-male club and then demanded their own exercise room. The response from the membership, Limbaugh said, was: " 'We'll be glad to give you your own exercise room; in fact, we'll even put the first three pieces of exercise equipment in there for you.' They put in a washing machine, ironing board, vacuum cleaner." Smith laughed at the line. His co-anchor, Paula Zahn, did not. "I will tell you," she said, her TV smile tightly drawn, "if he mentions that washing-machine line, he's not gonna survive his walk outside this studio."

Susan Faludi, author of the best-selling *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women,* thinks Limbaugh's "femi-Nazi" routine has historical precedent. "If you go back and look at the tirades in periodicals in the Victorian era, feminists were always characterized as totalitarian, forcing their views on victimized men. Anti-feminist men think feminists are far more powerful than they actually are—I mean, one *wishes* feminist leaders had that much authority." Faludi says she's not surprised by Limbaugh's popularity, but adds, "It makes me wonder about the women [listeners], who clearly don't have their heads screwed on straight—'Put me down again.' "

Gloria Allred believes that Limbaugh's humor and his popularity are "harmful to women. He's absolutely formidable, and I think that many of his statements could have a dangerous impact. I think they could create a climate where some people could think that it's O.K. to commit violence to women."

To Limbaugh, that is the sort of rhetorical overkill that justifies his own. He uses absurdity, he says, to puncture absurdity; if feminists can hold him responsible for sexual violence, then he can suggest that the feminist movement is led by ugly women who can't get dates: "They can't get a man, and their rage is one long PMS attack."

For one so full of bluster, though, Limbaugh is the essence of equanimity in direct interaction, and he is terrible at confrontation. When he was the guest host on a CBS late-night talk show two years ago, members of the AIDS-activist group ACT UP infiltrated the audience and heckled Limbaugh until the show came to a standstill. Limbaugh did not fire back, and finally the audience had to be cleared. Both CBS and Limbaugh had hoped the fill-in shot would lead to a permanent show, but the broadcast was a memorable disaster.

Several of his crew who were involved in that episode decry ACT UP's tactics, but they had their effect. Not only did Limbaugh not get his CBS show, but he soon dropped from his radio program a short-lived "AIDS Update" segment (theme song: "I'll Never Love This Way Again"), and donated $10,000 to the Pediatric AIDS Foundation. It is the one part of Limbaugh's act that he feels remorseful about. "[It] was the wrong thing to do. It ended up making fun of people who were dying, and it was not intended to do that, but it did, and I stopped doing that. I pulled back from it, because it was wrong."

Confrontation does not always work against Limbaugh, though. During the recent taping of a New York TV talk show, a remark he made so outraged fellow guest Sally Kirkland that the actress jumped to her feet, knocking over a glass of water, and launched into a tirade about the general destructiveness of the masculine nature. "[Women] may stop [us] from blowing ourselves up! All these guys with their, excuse me, c-o-c-k-s, competing with each other and with each other's countries! You don't see women going out there and causing wars!"

To which Limbaugh calmly replied, in his most avuncular and condescending tone, "Oh, now, Sally, we know that women with PMS *kill* people."

"I think the misunderstanding people have with me," Limbaugh says, "is that I hate women. I don't hate women, I don't hate anybody—I don't even dislike them." What he truly feels about women, he says, echoing a lament that pre-dates the current tension between the sexes, is confusion.

"I think that just getting along in an office surrounding, or in a social setting leading into romance, men and women are confused today over what role they should play. And it's clichéd to bring up the opening of a car door, but there was a time when that was a reality—women were trained by the feminist leadership that, no, you've got to do it for yourself, don't be beholden, don't owe a man anything.

"To this day, sometimes, to certain women, if I want to compliment them on their appearance, I'll say, 'Look, I don't mean to offend you, but you really look nice.' Because the attitude is, I could be making a move, I could be making a pass, I could be a sexist, or I could be a surface individual and not recognize their true beauty and worth underneath their exterior. I think there are a lot of those kinds of examples in our society that cause confusion. On the one hand, we want men who are sensitive and crying, like Alan Aldas, and then, after so much of that, women finally get tired of wimps and say, 'We want real men again!' O.K., so now we gotta change, we've got to go back to tough guys, we're not gonna take any shit. And our memories tell us, we go back to high school, look at who the girls went for—the assholes! The mean, dirty, greasy sons of bitches."

As if to underscore Limbaugh's lament, made as he heads home at the end of a long day, he is greeted in the 2 Penn Plaza lobby by a woman in her twenties, a station employee, who inquires about a relationship she has been advising him on.

"Is it working?" she asks.

"It's not working," Limbaugh responds. "It's not your fault, though."

What was the advice? "This young woman, who is the epitome of yuppiedom, heard me discussing a situation I'm having with a woman right now. She came in here and said, 'Rush, just don't pay any attention to her, be a little *mean*—you won't be able to get rid of her.' Yet we're told, 'Respect.' I am, I think, mortally confused."

Still, the Robert Bly of the airwaves believes he could succeed in marriage now. In fact, he knows just the sort of woman he wants as the third Mrs. Limbaugh.

"The key to it is I want a woman

who is self-sufficient. Not because I am afraid of being raped or robbed financially, but because of what it means about her psyche, her makeup, and her confidence. I want a woman who can entertain herself without me. I want a woman whose idea of a relationship is not 100 percent togetherness with every activity, because that's not possible. Somebody who's successful at what she does, and who knows what she wants."

He is confused—but the confusion cuts both ways. Limbaugh clearly has some closet listeners in the opposing sector, including his most vocal critic, Gloria Allred, who says that she often has to fight herself to keep from tuning in when cruising the freeways. "I'm still trying to sort out what I'm permitted to laugh at and what it is not politically acceptable for me to laugh at. When I'm in the privacy of my car, I guess I just have the reaction, uncensored, that I'm going to have. I mean, occasionally I'm flicking through and I hear him, and I say to myself, Don't listen! And then I get into a debate with myself: Should I listen so I know what the enemy is saying? Or should I not listen, because I don't want his ratings to improve?"

It is an interesting image—a resolute feminist connecting with an incendiary male persona as she drives down the L.A. freeways.

Mr. Bombast would be pleased. □

The Virgin King

(Continued from page 174) without having the grace to snigger."

In the early days Virgin's employees would go en masse to the pub around the corner in the evening. "It was a feature of pub life that Richard never drank his own beer," says Clark. "He would take someone else's, have a sip, and give it back to them. Likewise, you would never see him with his own cigarette. He would just pick up somebody else's from the ashtray."

With success came a certain conformity. "The fluency and ease with which one got together during the earlier phases of the company had given way to a much more heightened boardroom atmosphere," says Clark. "For a start, there *was* a boardroom, which is an indication of how serious things got. It was funny to see the haircuts and the suits—the things that had seemed to belong in a parallel universe—entering ours. The contrast between Richard's expression when he was in joker overdrive and when he was worried about the future of the company became more marked. It was as if somebody had drawn a hand across his face."

"The word survival was the only word that mattered until I was about thirty-five," Branson has said. "If you didn't survive, all the other dreams were dashed."

Still, if the world is different today, it sometimes seems that Richard Branson hasn't changed at all. "I remember in L.A. we were running this promotion," says David Tait. "We had all these travel agents to lunch and Richard walked up to one table and picked up a fork and just helped himself to some food off one of the ladies' plates. She was absolutely horrified. Richard's line—'Don't worry, I'm paying for this'—didn't exactly improve matters."

Informality reigns at Branson's "office," on the first floor of his home in Holland Park, a stately Victorian house that he has renovated, adding an underground pool. "Obviously I work and live in a very comfortable house," he says. "But generally I try not to flaunt my wealth. It's unfair for my staff to see the chairman turn up in a Rolls-Royce to pick up the money from the till. I suspect the staff might resent it. And also I suspect it's not good business."

He runs the Virgin group of companies from the huge apricot couch in front of his living-room hearth. Branson's black notebook sits on the coffee table, and one of his three secretaries brings in a sheaf of letters for his signature. You can hear phones ringing somewhere, and over in the dining room documents are being set out for a meeting later in the day.

Although unaligned with any political party, Branson became a poster boy for Margaret Thatcher—one of the bright young entrepreneurs she liked to point to as the hope of Britain. And while Branson downplays the Thatcher connection, he doesn't mind being held up as an example. "In England, entrepreneurship did have a bad name—as did making money and running a business," he says. "Quite a lot of that came from the image of American entrepreneurs with the big yachts and masses of gold and silver around their girlfriends' necks. Personal indulgences rather than investing the money back into companies and so on." When he successfully completed the second transatlantic speedboat crossing he motored up the Thames with Thatcher at his side.

Branson is the first to admit his wildman routine is designed to compensate for Virgin Atlantic's limited advertising budget. Still, there are easier ways to get press than almost killing yourself once a year. "The only way I can really explain why someone wants to do something like that," he once remarked, "is to ask them, 'If you had the chance to take off and fly around the world in a balloon, would you have a go?' And I find that most people say, without question, 'Yeah.' "

Brash as he can be, there's a nervous and intensely shy side to Branson, according to those who are close to him. Nik Powell, a childhood friend and former Virgin director, says the fact that Branson is a high-school dropout is partly to blame. "He's articulate, but in a rambling way rather than a university way," says Powell. Friends say he tends to shun the social set for simpler pleasures. "He lives next door to my parents in Oxford," says Sally Emerson, a longtime family friend. "He plays chess with my father, and the children absolutely worship him—they just follow him around, staring, because they know everything will be turned into an enormous adventure."

Although Branson is always working, he devotes April, August, and most of December to holidays with Joan and their two children, eleven-year-old Holly and six-year-old Sam. Wherever the family goes, there are toys large and small, huge gangs of people—often for company parties—and, always, games to be played. Branson is truly satisfied only when one frenzied activity gives way to the next, until everyone has fallen down from exhaustion. Full participation is compulsory, as one visitor discovered when he declined to join in a game of water polo at the country house, explaining that he hadn't brought a bathing suit. Branson promptly took off his own trunks, handed them over, and jumped naked into the pool to lead the game.

Necker Island is the company's own private playground, although Branson is said at times to have trouble unwinding to the Caribbean pace. (No matter—Virgin can rent it to vacationers for $8,250 a day. Branson has also been known to make it available to guests like Princess Diana.)

The Virgin King

On the rare occasions when he finds himself at home alone in the London house, friends say, he will invent a reason to go out rather than confront solitude.

Last fall, when Richard Branson saw Ivana Trump seated next to Lord King of Wartnaby, the British Airways chairman, at an industry awards luncheon in London, he picked her up by the hips and swung her upside down as punishment—a performance for which she later politely berated him in a letter: "While I can appreciate your skill at promotions, I would like you to know that I do not feel that your actions today were either appropriate or done in good taste."

On a recent evening, Branson was content merely to see Virgin Atlantic sweep the awards at another industry ceremony. As Prince Edward, the presenter, looked somewhat apprehensively in his direction, Branson—the only man in the ballroom not wearing a suit, and flanked by flight attendants in Virgin's blood-red uniforms—bounded forward to accept a hefty gold statue of a jet symbolizing the "Airline of the Year."

Branson has been merciless in singling out the rotund seventy-four-year-old Lord King as the mastermind behind what he labels a "dirty-tricks campaign" to run Virgin out of the sky. Branson claims B.A. has used such tactics as unfair price competition, dumping discount tickets on the market, trying to deny Virgin proper maintenance services, calling Virgin's business-class customers at home and intercepting them at airports to persuade them to change their bookings to B.A., and hiring an outside corporate P.R. man, Brian Basham, to discredit both Virgin and Branson. And all this to head off an airline that has only 8 jets in its fleet, as opposed to B.A.'s 240.

Indeed, some think B.A. has lost all perspective in its battle with Virgin: the entire worldwide group of Virgin companies employs roughly six thousand people. Last year, when B.A. needed to make cutbacks, it *laid off* nearly five thousand employees. Still, one industry analyst estimates that Virgin is already costing British Airways $255 million off its bottom line each year.

Lord King was not in attendance at the dinner. Also missing was Mr. Basham, whose moniker in the City is "the street fighter." According to Branson, Basham approached several reporters with a memo smearing Virgin's finances—and suggesting that Heaven, a gay club in London which Virgin owns, is "a high risk in terms of [Branson's] all important image." The memo claimed the club had "problems with the police, drug dealing, homosexuals and male prostitutes." (Reached by telephone, Basham declined to answer questions. "There isn't any battle between B.A. and Virgin," he snapped. "There is not a 'dirty tricks' campaign. It's another one of Branson's stunts.")

David Burnside, the head of publicity for B.A. and a close adviser to the airline's deputy chairman and chief executive, Sir Colin Marshall, preferred not to address the subject of Richard Branson: "We're not willing to play this game," he said.

In early March, Branson gave the press a copy of a letter to Sir Colin, demanding that B.A. apologize for its "dirty tricks," promise not to engage in similar practices in the future, and "dissociate" itself from Brian Basham. If Marshall did not satisfy Virgin, Branson indicated, he planned to sue B.A. in both Britain and the U.S.

In launching Virgin Atlantic, Branson already knew that airlines are a brutal industry, and a particularly hazardous one for minor players. Sir Freddie Laker's Skytrain and Air Europe had been run out of business within five years.

Virgin is well into its eighth year. Moreover, it is right behind B.A. as the second-largest carrier on the New York–London route. Its survival against the odds is due in part to Branson's savvy job of casting himself as David against Lord King's Goliath, although he says his only strategy is to avoid the fate that befell Laker. "I spoke with Laker before we started and he said, 'Look, B.A. is a vicious company—they will do *anything* to get rid of you. Be on your fettle all the time to combat anything they do. Shout loudly and publicly to embarrass them. Watch your backside.' "

But the major factor in the airline's success thus far has probably been that Branson views it the same way he did his record company: "Obviously, you've got to make sure you've got somebody running it who can safely get your airplane from A to B. But once you've sorted that out, the airline business has everything to do with entertainment." By focusing on quality and "the fun factor," Branson has been able to fly around the black hole that swallowed Freddie Laker. Where Laker's sole selling point was price—a game plan that left him no weapons when the major international carriers met and then beat his discount fares—Virgin Atlantic has married economy fares with a boutique approach to business class. Among the perks business fliers can get: free limousine service, in-flight manicures and massages, a free transatlantic coach ticket with every paid "Upper Class" ticket.

Having repeatedly pledged that Virgin will stay small, flying to no more than twelve destinations, Branson wants to cream British Airways on its best routes. He already has a Tokyo route and is planning to fly to Singapore, Hong Kong, and Sydney. But the real prize is the London–Johannesburg route: for nearly fifty years B.A. and South African Airways enjoyed a duopoly on the run, believed to be the most profitable in the world. No more—Virgin will start flying to Johannesburg in October. Branson's plan to limit Virgin Atlantic's growth doesn't mean there won't eventually be a Virgin Pacific. Or a Virgin Europe. "Air France deserves a run for its money at some stage," he says. "As does Lufthansa. I think the same concept could be set up in other countries."

Branson's success has put an end to the family tradition of shabby gentility. For the three generations preceding him, the Branson men were barristers: his great-grandfather James was with the colonial service as senior barrister at the Calcutta bar; his grandfather Sir George Branson was a legal scholar and High Court judge; and his father, Ted, is a retired barrister. His mother, Eve, a former dancer and glider pilot, was also a stewardess in the early days of intercontinental flight—back when a trip from London to South America took the better part of a week and oxygen masks were required for the ride over the Andes. For many years the family made do on a somewhat rigid budget: Eve ensured that Richard had a proper public-school education at Stowe, but there was never quite enough money to keep up the pretense that the family could actually afford their cottage in Shamley Green, a wealthy suburb of London.

But Branson likes to downplay his role as youthful patriarch. "Joan knows what matters in life," Branson has said of his wife. "She's not interested in possessions. She's not particularly interested in what I do." Branson wooed her away from her first husband, Scottish rock keyboardist and producer Ronnie Leahy, in 1978, but they didn't marry until two years ago. "We thought we'd get married before our kids did," he says. (He was delivered to the altar hanging off the landing struts of a helicopter.) The marriage is a true study in opposites—intensely pri-

vate, Joan also seems unflappable in the face of Branson's antics. Most important, while everyone else is overawed by Branson, Joan can say no to him. A Virgin employee explains her secret: "She's the only person in the world who's totally unimpressed with Richard."

Joan had just given birth to their son when Branson's first transatlantic boat crossing ran into trouble. "Joan was still in the hospital having Sam," says a family friend. "She was watching the television at the foot of the bed and there was her husband"—the *Virgin Atlantic Challenger*, having survived a storm, sank after colliding with a chunk of floating debris off the English coast. Late last year Joan finally put an end to her husband's daredevil ballooning. "She hates him doing those things," says another friend. "And, really, Joan is a very powerful figure."

The last hurrah was Branson and Lindstrand's Japan–California flight. The idea was to fly in the jet stream at 27,000 feet, housed in a pressurized cabin, and "the first thousand miles were fantastic," recalls Branson. "Then suddenly the whole capsule lurched thirty degrees. We'd lost half our fuel—all of it on one side." Gales were ripping the Pacific and it would have been impossible for a boat to reach them if they had ditched in the sea.

The only option was to follow the jet stream. Balloonists had rarely flown in winds faster than 100 miles per hour, but Branson and Lindstrand soon found themselves whipping by at 240 miles an hour. "The incredible thing about the balloon that Per built was we literally solar-flew," Branson later told an L.A. *Times* reporter. "We didn't use any fuel at all in the daytime. In fact, the frightening thing sometimes was trying to stop the balloon from going up. We had to open up the parachute [valve] in the top of the balloon in order to stop it from going off into space." When they ran into a high-pressure zone, they switched jet streams and headed for the Gulf of Alaska, eventually crossing the Rockies at 27,000 feet. "It was a tremendous moment," says Branson. "It was so exhilarating to think we were going to live!" Later, he remarked that he hadn't actually felt terror at the thought of dying: "It wasn't so much fear as *loneliness*."

Two key skills have aided Richard Branson since he launched his career at seventeen as co-founder and publisher of *Student*, a short-lived youth magazine: an ability to make people want to help him and a real knack as a bullshitter. Branson's gambits at *Student* have become legend. He persuaded Jean-Paul Sartre, Alice Walker, and Stephen Spender to contribute articles, and scored interviews with Vanessa Redgrave, R. D. Laing, and James Baldwin.

In a bid to raise money for the financially strapped magazine, Branson hit on the idea of selling discounted records by mail order. The first ad in *Student* for Virgin produced a flood of responses—but a postal strike threatened to put him out of business. To protect himself, Branson opened a hippie record shop where people felt free to sit on throw pillows and smoke pot. And although he liked to boast that *Student* was his opportunity to do "something really useful for young people," at nineteen Branson dropped the money-losing magazine to concentrate on the record business.

With the mail-order operation rolling, he bought the first of his nine recording studios, the Manor (for $51,000), and opened record shops on Oxford Street and in Liverpool. Once again cash-strapped, he devised an entirely illegal scheme to sell export records—which were exempt from the stiff British purchase tax—domestically. Branson would buy records intended for export, keep them, and ship nearly worthless discount titles or even empty boxes to the Continent. It worked like a charm for about a month. Arrested for tax fraud, a tearful Branson turned to his parents, who mortgaged their house to get him out of jail. He pleaded guilty and ultimately paid more than $85,000 in fines.

It was a turning point for Branson. He used the leverage of his first hit—Mike Oldfield's "Tubular Bells"—to strike unusually strong distribution and marketing deals around the world for his new labels, developing a reputation as a killer at the negotiating table. Although Jordan Harris now works for Virgin, he remembers having to make licensing deals with Branson while an executive at A&M Records. "He's fun," laughs Harris, "but *brutal*. I mean, he gets what he wants."

Although Virgin has had a few flops—including a film company, a weekly London entertainment guide called *Event*, a chain of clothing stores—Branson has flourished as a contrarian. "If he knew too much about anything, it would get in the way," says Harris. "He's got this very calculating mind that plays things out, but his instinct is brilliant. He knows how to approach a business and not get shut down, where other people would. If someone were to say, 'Oh, you can't do it that way,' *that's* when he says, 'Let's do it.' "

"When Rupert Murdoch went into newspapers—newspapers and airlines are the two industries that people say to avoid at all costs," Branson observes. "As an entrepreneur, Murdoch got that aspect absolutely right. Because if other people think that they are under no circumstances to be gotten into, then if you get it right, you can *really* get it right." He admits that his hunches are often strenuously opposed, at least at first, by his advisers. Simon Draper was so opposed to starting Virgin Atlantic that it almost ended their partnership. And Nik Powell, who functioned for twenty years as the company's voice of reason, eventually devolved into the Man Who Was Always Saying No to Richard. "Richard is a very strong and all-enveloping character," says the diplomatic Powell, who left to start the film company Palace Group, which produced *Mona Lisa*, *Scandal*, and *Rage in Harlem*.

While Branson has become hugely rich—his personal wealth is now estimated at about $1.7 billion—it's clearly not the only goal. "When we were young," says Powell, "Richard was motivated by the same thing that motivates most young people: excitement. Money certainly was an ambition, but an afterthought, a by-product of doing it. I think it was the desire to have an impact." In the eighties, Branson took Virgin's music and retail holdings public, and the move proved a disaster. His unorthodox personal style and preference for unpopular businesses made the market queasy; Virgin's stock quickly sank to half its initial price. For his part, Branson bristled at the sudden interference he felt from investment analysts, shareholders, and bankers, as well as from his artists and managers, who were losing money on their stock. He eventually took the operations private again with funding from Pony Canyon, in exchange for the 25 percent partnership in Virgin Records. Today, Branson can boast that thirty of his division managers have become millionaires, yet no one, in or out of Virgin, can really say "no" to him.

Branson, who has repeatedly said that he wants to apply his entrepreneurial skills to philanthropic ends in the coming years, used his airline to aid refugees during the Gulf War. His activities renewed speculations that he might consider entering politics, but Branson has always denied any interest in becoming an insider. "There's a danger that people get staid as they get older and they won't tackle the Establishment," he says. "There's an aw-

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ful lot of stupid laws, and the Establishment knows they're stupid. For example, I think brothels should be legalized and the girls properly checked to see that they're not H.I.V.-positive or have V.D., to see that they have a ready supply of condoms." Since 1968, the Branson-sponsored Help Advisory Centre has offered free counseling on birth control and sexually transmitted diseases. Five years ago, Branson created the Healthcare Foundation in response to the AIDS crisis.

The ability to act on his sense of mission is a luxury Branson is aware of as never before. "If you talk to a number of M.P.'s privately they'll agree" about the need for services such as those the foundation offers, he says. "But they won't dare get up and say it."

Two days after closing the Virgin Records deal, it was clear that Branson had survived the sale's "morning after." Within a week, he hired Robert Beckman, the American attorney who had filed an anti-trust suit against B.A. for Freddie Laker, to consider legal action on behalf of Virgin in the United States. A few days later, on March 20, Virgin began libel proceedings against B.A. and Lord King in Britain.

Now that he had enough money to wage his air war for as long as he wanted, Branson was trying hard to be diplomatic rather than gloat. After all, this is serious business, and, as his latest deal proved, he is one of the world's most serious entrepreneurs. "British Airways has spent the last two years trying to push us into the abyss," he said sternly. "Now it's time for them to accept that there'll be two British airlines for the next fifty years."

But Branson couldn't quite pull it off; he just couldn't play the sober captain of industry. "You know," he chortled, "I'm trying very hard to resist saying 'Up yours, Lord King!' " □

What Hillary Wants

(Continued from page 147) concrete airfield, coatless, eager to coach her husband and rev up the campaign staff on a conference call. "Who's getting information on the *Star*?" she demanded. "Who's tracking down all the research on Gennifer? Where is our surrogate program? Who's going to be out there speaking for us?" She let the fragile young staffers who had not experienced a Hiroshima in a campaign know that she and Bill were going to be out there fighting, "and I want you all to be putting this stuff together."

"It was," says deputy campaign manager George Stephanopoulos, "inspirational."

To Hillary Clinton, the stories of her husband's sexual infidelities seem to register, consciously at least, as having nothing to do with her, or with their marriage, but rather as evidence of the depths of degradation to which the hit men behind George Bush will stoop. Rarely does anyone in her audiences dare to bring up the question of infidelity, and when someone does, Hillary usually knocks it out of the park, leaving people cheering. Her refrain has become something of a mantra, protecting her from ever seeming to take the whole ugly business personally: "This is a much bigger issue than just Bill and me—I just hope for the sake of the country we'll set some boundaries for others coming along."

Not only is her altruistic defense politically astute, it also serves to buffer her psychologically from the feelings that would send most women off on an emotional roller coaster. "It doesn't make any difference what people say about her," says her friend Stuck, "whatever criticism or belittling, she doesn't take it personally, because the cause is always more important. It may very well be the way she insulates herself from hurt. And I think in the past ten or twelve years with Bill she may have done that, to protect her sanity."

In all the time I traveled with Hillary, and in sixty interviews with her friends, family, and associates, there was just one hint of a deep emotional reaction. "She never shows her personal feelings on the surface," attests Carolyn Huber, but that week, when the governor's wife phoned her confidante and Huber broke into sobs, a fissure opened in the protective coating of equanimity. "I know, Carolyn, it's hurting so bad," Hillary said. "The press doesn't believe you have any feelings. They sure don't believe in the Bible."

But Hillary is also an avowed pragmatist, accustomed to life in the political fishbowl. "She knew this day would come," says Jan Piercey, her former college dormmate, "and she wasn't going to put anybody in the position of lying." Another friend says of the media frenzy over Clinton's nocturnal peccadilloes, "None of this came as a surprise to her."

I asked Hillary if she thought her husband had told her everything she needed to know. "Yes. I have absolutely no doubt about that," she replied, her light-blue eyes unblinking beneath the dark hedgerow of brows. "I don't think I could be sitting here otherwise. That's been, over years, part of the development of trust."

I asked if she thought Gary Hart was qualified to be president, or did she think his problems revealed something disturbing about his character? "He was not yet at a point where he could be honest with himself, that's my perception," she said. "People in his campaign said they confronted him and said, 'Have you ever?' and he said 'No.' "

She praised Bill Clinton for being honest with the people he loves, admitting his problems, and declaring he wanted to do better. "I think as he got older, as he became a father, he began to let his breath out a little bit," observes Hillary. Her husband believes that trauma and mistakes are all tests that help one grow. For him, says Hillary, "it's a constant coming to grips with who you are and what stage of life you can grow beyond."

The Clintons' friends fiercely idealize their marriage, seeing in it a remarkable integration of strong personalities and sheer guts. "Most of us have thrown in the towel," says one friend, the thoughtful actress Mary Steenburgen. "These people didn't. It's exciting to be around them and to see how it *can* be to be a married couple." Another member of the "Arkansas diaspora" in L.A., television producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, is one of Hillary's most loyal intimates. "Look, this isn't Lurleen Wallace," says Bloodworth-Thomason. "Hillary doesn't have to stay with Bill Clinton. She could get to the Senate or possibly the White House on her own—and she knows it. . . . But these two people are intertwined on every level, as a man and woman, as friends, as lovers, as parents, as politicians. . . . This is a love story." Huber agrees, describing how "Bill and Hillary are always smooching." Their pals call the Clintons "soul mates," saying they confide fully in nobody, not even family, only in each other.

"She also has an investment in this marriage and his career," points out the practical Wright, who says Hillary never

considered divorce. "It absolutely was not an alternative that she gave him."

The only area of vulnerability friends spot in Hillary is her daughter, Chelsea. The longest periods of silence she maintains are in hotel rooms, a phone cradled to her ear, often dead tired but listening without interruption to the stream-of-consciousness account of the twelve-year-old's day. Before the campaign, Hillary was out of town on law or board work two or three nights a week. She does homework with Chelsea by fax.

"Whenever Hillary was there, she always sat with Chelsea while she had dinner," recalls Melinda Martin, the resident baby-sitter from '85 to '87. (Most of the Clintons' baby-sitters are fresh out of the University of Arkansas, with names like Melinda, Melissa, and Michelle.)

I asked Melinda how often Bill and Hillary went out together. "Just the two of them? Very, very seldom. . . . Hillary took Chelsea on vacations. Bill would promise to catch up, but usually he'd come a couple of days late, or not at all."

Hillary's protectiveness of her daughter took precedence one evening, at the peak of the bimbomania, when she was facing a command performance as the "candidate's wife" before a backbiting Washington audience at a roast of Ron Brown, chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Bill was scheduled to take Chelsea to a father-daughter dance at the Little Rock Y.W.C.A. Their friend Linda Bloodworth-Thomason had an inspiration: "Let's do a live remote to Little Rock—it will be a nice image for them to see Bill dancing with his daughter."

Hillary didn't think twice. "No," she said. "This is Chelsea's night."

It is one of Hillary's philosophical tenets that children should be spoken to just like adults. This explains how Hillary is able to pass the supermarket checkout counter in the company of her adored daughter without gagging. Indeed, Hillary is the first to point out the lurid tabloid headlines screaming about multiple affairs or a love child, instructing Chelsea that "this is what's to be expected in a political campaign." Chelsea follows the political horse race avidly, but "when they talk bad about my daddy" on TV, she leaves the room.

For women who have been betrayed by unfaithful husbands, Hillary Clinton is a Rorschach test. Some grimace at the prospect of having their hearts broken by a man whose story you never know whether to believe: "I don't want another charmer." Others admire her stoicism and buy the strength-through-adversity story.

Still, any wife subjected to embarrassing, detailed reports of infidelity must register searing pain at some level. It is quite possible that Hillary is so focused on power agendas that she is disconnected from her feelings, able to compartmentalize her pain: she codes it, labels it, and puts it away in the deep freeze. What does that leave? An unresolved hurt so profound that it may not surface until all the sound and fury of campaigning is over.

The secret behind Hillary's boldness goes back to the torch passed from a silent generation of mothers to the daughters of the feminist movement. "I was determined that no daughter of mine was going to have to go through the agony of being afraid to say what she had on her mind," says Dorothy Rodham, Hillary's mother, who hadn't finished college before marrying Hugh Rodham, a rough-edged Chicago salesman and later owner of a small textile business. Mrs. Rodham made raising her three children her full-time occupation. They played endless word games and rarely watched television. Thus, Hillary was an especially sheltered four-year-old when the Welsh-English family moved to Park Ridge, a middle-class, white-collar suburb out near O'Hare airport.

The new neighborhood was dominated by a family with a daughter, Suzy, who regularly decked the beribboned little Hillary, watching in triumph as she ran home sobbing.

"There's no room in this house for cowards," Hillary's mother announced one day. "You're going to have to stand up to her. The next time she hits you, I want you to hit her back."

Out trudged the trembling four-year-old. A circle of scowling boys and the pugilistic girl closed around her. Suddenly, Hillary threw out her fist, knocking Suzy off her pins. The boys' mouths dropped open. Flushed with victory, Hillary ran home to exclaim to her proud mother, "I can play with the boys now!"

The lesson sank in deep. "Boys responded well to Hillary," clucks her mother. "She just took charge, and they let her." Even as a child she thought in terms of mobilizing constituents for her causes, organizing neighborhood carnivals or clothing drives for migrant workers. As a young teen she helped her youth minister, the Reverend Don Jones, in counseling black and Hispanic teens from the South Side. "She would think things through to see what would be appealing to the group," recalls her brother Hugh. "We would just follow along as little brothers."

The other formative experience for Hillary was competitive sports. A keen though terminally mediocre athlete, Hillary now appreciates having learned the lesson few girls did in those days: "You win one day, you lose the next day, you don't take it personally. You get up every day and you go on." It became the pattern of her life, a pattern that has fortified her in the topsy-turvy days of the current campaign.

To go east in 1965 to Wellesley College—"all very rich and fancy and very intimidating to my way of thinking"—was a big stretch. She started out a Goldwater Girl. Though instant conversions to radicalism were common at the time, Hillary had a slower, more thoughtful evolution in her political views, working her way through the moderate Rockefeller wing of the Republican Party to campaigning for Eugene McCarthy by '68.

Jeff Shields, her Harvard boyfriend in those days, who is now a Chicago lawyer, fell in love with her earnestness. "The thing that I remember most were the conversations," he recalls. "She would rather sit around and talk about current events or politics or ideas than to go bicycle riding or to a football game."

Hillary's charisma was strong enough to attract a half-dozen girls to move into the Gothic dorm, Stone Davis, to be near her. They all ate together in a cloistered stone-and-glass gazebo. "You were surrounded by role models," remembers Jan Piercey of the all-female college. "We came away just assuming that everyone had serious aspirations." Hillary became president of her college government and graduated with high honors.

Coming to political consciousness in the late 1960s, Hillary saw these as "years dominated by men with dreams, men in the civil-rights movement and the Peace Corps, the space program." As an ambitious fourteen-year-old Hillary had written to NASA asking what it took to be an astronaut. She was told girls need not apply. Still, "growing up in the fifties, a lot of us sensed that we could redefine what women do." Her mother had hoped Hillary would be the first woman on the Supreme Court, "but Sandra Day O'Connor beat her to it," she jokes. Friends along the way have told her what Dorothy Stuck says today: "Regardless of what happens to Bill, the nation will be exposed to Hillary Clinton, and Hillary could—and should—be our first woman president."

Bill Clinton's childhood, as tumultuous as Hillary's was stable, helps illuminate his complicated relationship with his wife and the mistakes that have tested

their political and personal partnerships.

Three months prior to his birth, his mother, a high-spirited, part–Native American, part-Irish woman by the maiden name of Virginia Cassidy, lost Bill's father, the first of her four husbands. William Jefferson Blythe III, a traveling salesman, swerved across the highway driving home from Chicago and drowned in a rain-filled ditch at the age of twenty-nine. The tragedy meant that Bill was left with his grandparents in the tiny town of Hope, Arkansas, for his first four years while his mother went off to New Orleans to pursue nurse's training in anesthesiology. Young Billy adored his grandfather, a six-day-a-week storekeeper who died when the boy was eleven. From then on he was bereft of family male role models.

When I asked Bill Clinton who was the first man who endorsed him as worthwhile, there was a very long pause. He stared out the plane window at the bleak, snow-blistered New England terrain. After mentioning his grandfather, he spoke stiffly of his stepfather Roger Clinton. "He took me to St. Louis in a train once, I remember that." He dredged up one family vacation, one fishing trip. "Literally, all those years and I can count on one hand—there just weren't many times. It was sort of sad. . . . I missed it."

When Bill was seven, the family moved to Hot Springs, a tingly place notorious for its racetrack, illegal gambling clubs, whorehouses, and gangster glamour. Every winter the high rollers would come from New York and Chicago and Miami Beach, looking for action. "The Clintons fit in with all that," says Carolyn Staley, the local preacher's daughter, who introduced herself to me at Clinton headquarters as "Bill's 'girl next door.' " Staley says Virginia Clinton was at the races every day—still is—she has her own box. "She loves it, it's in her blood. She wrote her own rules."

Clinton's mother also worked at being glamorous. With a silver streak dyed down the middle of her dark hair and three shades of eye shadow, "she'd put on tailored men's pajamas and mules and hang around with a cigarette in her hand, real Hollywood," says Staley. "She was a good-lookin' lady and hilarious. . . . One-liners are her trademark, like a walking female Will Rogers."

Virginia Clinton remained emotionally stoic through the abuse of Bill's alcoholic stepfather, who went on rampages that sometimes ended with a bullet hole shot in the wall or a beating of Bill's mother or younger brother. Finally, at fourteen, Clinton put an end to the violence in a shocking confrontation that marked the turning point of his adolescence. Hearing a fight, he broke down the door of his parents' bedroom. "[I] told him that I was bigger than him now, and there would never be any more of this while I was there," Clinton recalled to political writer Joe Klein.

Virginia Clinton temporarily threw Roger out of the house—a brief divorce—and began taking her teenage son along to a nightclub she frequented called the Vapors. During racing season the club ran fast and loose with lusty Vegas entertainers singing over the raucous *chi-ching* of slot machines and the squeals at the blackjack tables—an experience which seems to have simultaneously intrigued and repelled the boy. "It was fascinating," Bill told me. But he added, "I didn't like to be around dark smoky places where people were drinking too much. . . . I had a real negative association with alcoholism. I think subconsciously I was afraid it would happen to me." Bill later became president of his Baptist Sunday-school class.

"Some of the mistakes I made later in life were rooted in all those things that were unsaid or unexplored when we were growing up," Bill told me. Virginia Clinton made no attempt to explain or analyze behavior. "My mother was trying to keep peace and survive in an explosive situation." Bill never rebelled, adds Staley. "He had to be the shining light in his mother's life."

The fact that his reality as a child was completely defined by a woman may explain his later dependence on Hillary and other strong women. Young Bill also developed the pleasing style of many children from alcoholic homes, who reason, as Betsey Wright describes it, " 'If I'm really nice, and I make this person feel better, then maybe this [behavior] will stop.' " Wright adds, "I can see that in Bill now. *He* sees it."

Another common result in families where parents are weak, narcissistic, or alcoholic is that the growing child either copies the immature habits he sees at home or leaps ahead to become a premature grown-up. The missed childhood can later trigger immature behavior as an adult. "I always wondered if I'd want to be sixteen when I was forty because I never felt like I got to complete my childhood," Bill Clinton has said.

Carolyn Staley confides that "Virginia and Bill and Hillary have taken what might otherwise have been made out to be a debilitating background and they've carefully developed a spin to their lives to make Bill the conquering hero."

Bill Clinton first laid eyes on Hillary Rodham at Yale Law School in a class they shared in political and civil liberties. He thought she was "the greatest thing on two legs," but there was more to the attraction. They belonged to a new generation, where everything was supposed to be equitable between the sexes. Hillary had come to Yale already a star, renowned as a multiple winner on the TV quiz show *College Bowl*, and as the college senior who delivered an extraordinary counter-commencement speech at Wellesley College in 1969. The address, which earned her national publicity, including her picture in *Life*, had struck a very sixties tone: "We feel that our prevailing, acquisitive and competitive corporate life . . . is not the way of life for us. We're searching for more immediate, ecstatic . . . modes of living."

What does Hillary remember as the most ecstatic experience of her twenties? She ponders, then laughs, conjuring up the sunny southerner with Elvis sideburns who entered Yale Law School a year after she did. "Falling in love with Bill Clinton," she answers.

What attracted her to him? "He wasn't afraid of me," says Hillary.

"But I was afraid of *us*, I tell you that," admits Bill.

He trailed her out of the class they shared, following her so close he could smell her hair, and then he stopped dead in his tracks. *No, this is nothing but trouble*, he told himself. "I could just look at her and tell that she was interesting and deep." He walked away. For the next couple of weeks he stared at her, he stalked her, but he couldn't bring himself to make the first move.

One night, huddled at the end of the library, he watched the object of his gaze stand up and march the full length of the Yale Law School library until she stood face-to-face with him. "Look, if you're going to keep staring at me, then I'm going to keep looking back," Hillary said, "and I think we ought to know each other's names. I'm Hillary Rodham."

"I was dumbstruck," says Bill Clinton. "I couldn't think of my name."

They have been looking at each other with mixed feelings of fascination and apprehension ever since.

Studious, solemn, dynamic, substantive—these are the adjectives her classmates use to describe Hillary Rodham at Yale Law School. Hillary gave no

thought to "getting herself up," and was in fact mousy-haired, makeupless, and somewhat intimidating behind her oversize, Steinem-like glasses. Big Bill Clinton, by contrast, was "Mr. Aura"—a good time, funny, intense, a very quick study. Bill shared a famous beach house for the first two years with an African-American from a family of Philadelphia Republicans, Bill Coleman. He remembers Clinton partying, reading Camus, dating several women (including an African-American classmate). But he spent most of his time working on political campaigns. "He did not spend lots of time trying to master *Marbury* v. *Madison*," snickers Coleman.

Professor Burke Marshall remembers Hillary vividly. "She was even then forceful, very smart, very articulate. Some very good lawyers ramble, but that's not Hillary. Her mind is an organized mind." Of Bill Clinton he says, "He was a very good student, he's very, very smart. But I'd never have thought Bill Clinton was law-firm material. He was obviously going to be a candidate."

To Clinton, law school was just a credential. He had a single-track focus. Even when he and Hillary took a house together, a baby Colonial, and "he was totally consumed by somebody else's being," as Coleman recalls, Clinton did not take his eye off his soaring political ambitions. As a result, doubts about the match lingered for Bill and Hillary. "I loved being with her, but I had very ambivalent feelings about getting involved with her," Bill admits. He insists he warned Hillary from their earliest dates, "You know, I'm really worried about falling in love with you, because you're a great person, you could have a great life. If you wanted to run for public office you could be elected, but I've got to go home. It's just who I am."

When Hillary and Bill joined the Barristers' Union, to put on a competitive trial before a real jury, she whipped him into shape as her partner. Alan Bersin, a fellow student, now a partner at Munger, Tolles & Olson in L.A., chuckles as he remembers Bill, "who was superb at presenting. But Hillary was definitely the serious one about getting work done and thinking through the position." They did not, however, win the prize trial. "I just had a bad day," Bill told me sheepishly, adding that it didn't help when "Hillary wore this bright-orange outfit."

But the dynamic duo made a lasting impression on one of the judges, John Doar, a hero of the civil-rights movement. Six months after they graduated, Doar was shopping for crack young lawyers to staff the House Judiciary Committee inquiry that would prepare the impeachment case against President Richard Nixon. Bill excused himself; he was already geared up for his 1974 congressional race. But what about Hillary? "If he hadn't suggested her, I would have called her anyway," says Doar.

The work was thrilling and grueling, twenty hours a day for six months. In August, treed by the committee's work and public opinion, Nixon resigned. By the end of her first year out of law school, Hillary Rodham had become part of history.

Why would she marry him? That was what her Wellesley classmates and the feminists who knew Hillary from the McGovern campaign demanded to know. Most thought Bill was terrific. *But move to Arkansas? You gotta be kidding,* the subtext clearly being *buncha redneck racists.*

"I kept struggling between my head and my heart," Hillary remembers. Head said: gold-plated law firm in New York or Washington, public-interest law, or government. Heart won. Later in the summer of 1974, she "took a leap of faith" and moved to Fayetteville. "I just knew I wanted to be part of changing the world," she says now. "Bill's desire to be in public life was much more specific than my desire to do good."

Hillary and Bill taught at the University of Arkansas Law School, eschewing living together "because of the local mores." After a year of trying on Arkansas life, Hillary decided to see what all her friends were doing that she might be missing. "I went to Boston, New York, Washington, Chicago," she recalls. "I didn't see anything out there that I thought was more exciting or challenging than what I had in front of me."

When Bill picked her up at the midget airport, he was ebullient. "You know that house you liked?" Hillary looked blank. "What house?"

As Bill tells the story, she'd made a passing comment about a pretty little glazed-brick house. He'd gone out and bought it, feathering the nest with an antique bed and flowered sheets from Wal-Mart. "So you're going to have to marry me," he declared, winding up his pitch as he pulled into the driveway of the house. Two months later she did.

"I was disappointed when they married," admits Betsey Wright, who had met the dating couple when they came to her home state of Texas to work for the McGovern campaign in 1972. "She has been absolutely critical to Bill's success but, then, I had images in my mind that she could be the first woman president."

Mack McLarty, a childhood friend of Bill's who now serves with Hillary on the board of the yogurt giant TCBY Enterprises, adds candidly, "I married above myself in terms of intellect, like Bill did."

For Hillary, Arkansas was a different world. Even in Little Rock, where they moved in 1976 when Bill became attorney general, women were expected to be content with curling their eyelashes and selecting china patterns—especially political wives.

Instead, Hillary was recruited as one of the first women in the state to join a mainline law practice, the Rose Law Firm, after several partners were impressed by the way she set up the University of Arkansas's legal-aid clinic. "I think initially there were some [clients] who might put her into a stereotype...the pushy, Yankee female," says her law partner Webb Hubbell, "but I don't think anybody after fifteen minutes with Hillary would think that.... She can tell if the client is very nervous or concerned about something and can put them at ease."

In 1978 the Clintons swept into the governor's office with the promise of youth and purity. "Arrogant" was the outcry of the Establishment, and the governor's spouse became the lightning rod for people's resentment. To southerners expecting a more decorative First Lady, Hillary Rodham was almost an eyesore. She rejected makeup, glared through thick glasses, drowned herself in big shapeless fisherman's sweaters, and adamantly stuck to her maiden name.

Two years later, at the age of thirty-two, Hillary produced her "one perfect child" the same month she made law partner. According to Carolyn Huber, Hillary believed the baby came three weeks early because she was under the emotional stress of litigating a tough child-custody case. There were harrowing hours until Hillary underwent a cesarean. Finally, Bill emerged from the delivery room in green scrubs, cradling a seven-pound baby, saying he was "bonding" with his new daughter, and generally acting "like he'd invented fatherhood," says Diane Blair, a political-science professor in Fayetteville.

But it was also an election year. When the newspapers reported that "Governor Bill Clinton and Hillary Rodham had a daughter," the voters were outraged at their First Lady's blatant feminism.

His defeat that November was devastating for the wunderkind governor, who was written off as having no political future. "There are a couple of periods in my adult life that were pretty tough," says

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Bill, and this was the first one. Observant friends think Bill also felt as if he had failed Hillary. "The mutual admiration that creates the closeness in their marriage also produced difficulties," says Piercey.

At the time of his disorienting loss, Hillary's own career was soaring. "Subconsciously, that's hard for all of us," sympathizes Herb Rule, another of Hillary's partners. "You always want your friends and spouse to do well. But not at a time when you're failing."

For the next six months, according to friends, the governor "went a little crazy." They suggest that the Clintons' marital problems began around this time, and lasted until a few years ago. Before the couple purchased a small house, Betsey Wright was summoned to move into the mansion and see what was salvageable of Bill's career and his political records. "He got crazy in the incessant quest for understanding what he did wrong, which was masochistic," remembers Wright.

The ousted governor stalked around the state apologizing for himself—and seeking solace. "The frustrations I went through in the seven years of being his chief of staff," moans Wright, "of watching the groupie girls hanging around and the fawning all over him. But I always laughed at them on the inside, because I knew no dumb bimbo was ever going to be able to provide to him all of the dimensions that Hillary does."

According to Wright, Clinton resisted the aphrodisiac effect of his powerful position more than many men. But, she admits, "Bill was always very careless, out of an unbelievable naïveté. He has a defective shit detector about personal relationships sometimes. He just thinks everyone is wonderful. He is also careless about appearances."

Bill remembers during this dark period being so haunted by a sense of imminent death, "I would seize everything." Hillary thinks he "viewed his father's death as so irrational—so out of the blue—that it really did set a tone for his own sense of mortality. . . . Not just in his political career. It was reading everything he could read, talking to everybody he could talk to, staying up all night, because life was passing him by." Uncharacteristically, her narrative begins to skip at this juncture: "I mean it was . . . it was an intense sense of . . . what he might miss at any moment."

Some say Hillary took the political defeat harder than her husband did. When she gets down for brief periods, she withdraws into reading, playing dress-up with Chelsea, or trudging off to the Y to work out. She also prays. "Hillary has an unbelievable ability to control her personality and her moods," marvels Wright. Sometimes, she pops off, not often, but stingingly. "The person on the receiving end never gets over it," says Huber.

Hillary determined to do whatever it took to put her husband back in power. So, without a word from Bill, she shed her name for his. She also dyed her hair, traded her thick glasses for contacts, and feigned an interest in fashion.

The Clintons campaigned nonstop those next two years—on top of their jobs at respective law firms. The first of a series of baby-sitters was hired to live on the premises and be on twenty-four-hour call. Once their daughter began speaking, at age two, "Chelsea would say, 'I want my mama,' " recalls Huber, but she soon learned to answer her own question: "Mommy go make 'peech."

Commonly, a chief of staff and willful wife are natural enemies, but "Hillary made herself absolutely indispensable," says Betsey Wright. She sat in on their strategy sessions. "Her own performance in selling and implementing his government programs was extraordinary. There were so many ways he needed her."

Hillary also acted as his conscience. "I think that there have been many times when he would have liked to go home and turn on the TV and escape or just read a book," concedes Wright, "and she would be in with a list of things people had called her about that day or that had to be done. He would be 'Ah, couldn't you just be a sweet little wife?' instead of being this person helping me be what I'm supposed to be.

"Between Hillary at home and me at the office, pushing and pushing him, I know there was a point where he felt, *These people need to leave me alone. I just want to do what I want to do.* It was a rebellion."

By the time voters returned the Clintons to the governor's mansion in 1982, Hillary was ready with her beaded inauguration gown, Chantilly lace over charmeuse silk. And for Easter she made sure to pick out the sort of cartwheel-brimmed hat that would stir whispers of "Very nice" and "Just right." As Jan Piercey puts it, "Hillary made her tradeoffs early on, and I think she steeled herself not to look back."

The Clintons marched straight into the heat of public censure in '83 when the governor appointed Hillary to chair the state committee on educational standards. She spearheaded a requirement for a one-time teacher examination. "Lower than a snake's belly," one school librarian called her. It was typical of the insults she faced for the next several years.

Hillary pushed on to introduce a consumer-rights approach to education, and the concept of continuing education for educators. She barnstormed around the state for hearings, stopping in all seventy-five counties. Her husband massaged his legislature until Arkansas was eventually funneling seventy cents out of every tax dollar into education programs. These improvements—plus the governor's timely hike last year in teachers' salaries—won over the teachers' union, which had been their bitterest foe. It was typical of the way their political partnership worked.

Hillary also injected her ideals into her corporate-board work. As a sort of resident sociologist on the board of Wal-Mart, a nonunion company with 380,000 employees, she contributed to the retailing giant's ranking in *The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America*. Named head of Wal-Mart's environmental committee, she reframed the question from waste disposal to education and launched the company on a recycling program. She "saved us from a false start on environmental policy," says Rob Walton, son of the company's founder.

The Clintons' partnership looked perfect, at least from the outside. And then Bill stepped on another land mine from his past.

He was thirty-seven when he went through the worst year of his life. It was 1984, during his second term as governor, when a colonel of the state police phoned Betsey Wright, who dashed out to track down Hillary in a nearby restaurant and tell her, "We need to talk to Bill." His twenty-seven-year-old half-brother, Roger, had been spotted selling cocaine. The state police wanted to inform Clinton about their undercover surveillance. Though he was pained by it, he told them to proceed. "It was," says Hillary, "a much greater crisis than anything we've had in this presidential campaign."

Bill's half-brother did more than a year in prison, then came out only to discover that he was cross-addicted to alcohol. A drug counselor rounded up Bill, Roger, their mother, and even occasionally Hillary for intense family therapy. She led them through discussions on co-dependency. Clinton says the process helped him to learn things he never knew about

himself. The counselor told them that the line between wanting to be a rock star—Roger's dream—and a governor is a very thin one.

During "the next two or three years of discovery...they all came to grips with having grown up in the home of an abusive stepfather," says Wright.

"After my brother got into trouble in 1984, it really had a profound impact on me," explains Clinton. "I just couldn't imagine.... I kept asking myself, How could I not have known this?"

The unfinished business of his past threw him again into a period of disequilibrium. He feared he might not be able to live up to the great expectations of his political life and his life partner. The soul-searching, which coincided with Bill's mid-life passage from the age of thirty-seven to forty, also sparked a revival of the behavior that had earlier put strains on their marriage.

In the summer of 1987 forty-year-old Bill Clinton was poised to launch his candidacy for the presidency. Political big shots flew into Little Rock for the announcement luncheon. Everything was ready.

But moments before the scheduled start, Bill backed out. He and Hillary had had a heart-to-heart talk about the long-standing rumors of his zipper problem. Chelsea was only seven. It was too soon. The press that July day caught a rare glimpse of Hillary Rodham Clinton spilling emotion: she stood behind Bill and wept.

The period that followed the climb-down from their joint national aspirations may have been the nadir of their marriage. A clue slipped out during the *60 Minutes* confessional. Bill told Steve Kroft humbly, "If we had given up on our marriage ...three years ago, four years ago, you know...If we were divorced, I wouldn't be half the man I am today, without her and Chelsea."

So it was that Hillary Clinton woke up one morning last August in the Arkansas governor's mansion, looked over at her husband's sleepy face, and told him, "You almost have to do it," meaning run for president.

"Do you have any idea what we're getting into?" he asked.

"I know, it'll be tough," she replied. But she was ready to take her own platform national, as a campaign letter described it. And she was bored with the politics of Arkansas, where her husband has put in a full decade as governor. "She doesn't like all the duties of First Lady," confirmed her brother Hugh Rodham. "It's tiresome and too local."

Reflecting back on the personal journey he has made over the last four years, Bill says the fear of life running out at any moment has subsided. "It's all different now. I think—in the aftermath of my brother's encounter and all the stuff that Hillary and I went through, and where we are together now, and Chelsea—I'm so much more relaxed. I got into this race because I really felt I was strong enough and ready to be president...and because the things that Hillary and I have worked on together were more relevant to what has to be done in the country than anybody else."

"Every life has challenges," Hillary told me philosophically. "Life has become very unpredictable and scary for people. And the only insurance policy you've got against whatever comes down the pike is to be as ready as you personally can be. I think that's part of what the voters have been saying to me: Nobody could have predicted that all this would happen to you. You didn't ask for it. But you were ready. And, boy, we're glad you were."

If he loses, Hillary predicts, "Bill and I have great opportunities, we'll always be able to make a good living, we've got a wonderful daughter—we'll be fine." It doesn't usually work that way, however, particularly not for two driven people whose every axon and dendrite have been tingling for months as they crisscross the country in matching campaign planes, eager to deliver political redemption to the masses. If suddenly they land, SPLAT, back in Little Rock, and they wake up to the concern that their child has been necessarily neglected, and perhaps Hillary begins to thaw out the small, excruciatingly painful little package in the deep freeze labeled "Bill's Marital Mistakes," this could be a very difficult period.

But Hillary Clinton also has developed her own form and substance, her survival instincts and resilience. Maybe the next gubernatorial election the other Clinton will run. There could be a role switch: Bill might find rewards in replicating his childhood—supporting the woman who defines and controls his existence.

And maybe the next presidential election, or several more down the line, the other Clinton will be on the ticket. As Hillary told a Los Angeles audience recently, "We'll have a woman president by 2010."

Would she consider running? she was pressed.

"We'll talk later." □

CREDITS

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Editor's note: On page 12 of the April issue, the photograph of Marie Brenner was taken by Firooz Zahedi, that of Ken Auletta by Thomas Victor. The photographs on page 114 of the April issue were from U.P.I./Bettmann (top) and *The Sporting News* (bottom).


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Planetarium

TAURUS ♉ *April 20–May 20*

Five bucks says that this month, for reasons beyond your control, you'll cut short a trip, or consider quitting school, or refuse to go along with the loose morality that's all around. That's because Neptune and Uranus, the planets responsible for the spurt of mental growth and openness you've been experiencing in recent months, will appear to stop dead in their tracks the third week in April. If you could translate the squiggles on an EEG into words, yours would reveal a return-to-traditional-values mode now. And if the presidential election were held this month and only Tauruses could vote, ten bucks says the Republicans would win.

GEMINI ♊ *May 21–June 21*

These days you can't seem to escape from credit-card madness and a dread of the *inevitable* that creeps into your mind even during the gayest of gatherings. Well, be energized as Mars squares Gemini straight into May. It's a good time to rechannel those lower drives. Although there is nothing like a madcap escapade in the bedroom to maintain youthful demeanor, this probably isn't the moment. If you feel bounced up against ridiculous odds or locked inside a cat's cradle, once Mercury enters Aries on April 15, make a bid for freedom. And if anybody tries to bring you down, give him a right hook.

CANCER ♋ *June 22–July 22*

Now that you've turned control of your life over to a force more powerful than a Pacific Ocean tsunami and taken a great leap of faith, it should be getting easier to accept a new direction. But with the retrogrades of Uranus and Neptune during the second half of April, expect to have at least two thousand second thoughts. You're still being guided by that handsome star in the northern sky, but even the divine plan has a few glitches. Hang on to a big tree so that you don't get blown too far from home. Next fall you'll continue on your way to a new place in consciousness. You may even be allowed to bring your favorite chair.

LEO ♌ *July 23–August 22*

After all the effort you have put into the last eight months, stop worrying about work and enjoy a few secret fantasies. That may seem impossible, considering the current retrogrades of Uranus and Neptune, income taxes, and the general cursed condition of the creative life. Maybe you are being grandiose and unrealistic. So what? When Jupiter moves forward in your 2nd house on May 1, you've got to feel a little treasure in your hands. There has to be a greater sense of fiscal well-being and the belief that you will be taken care of in style. Think of it this way: If you were a teacher, you'd get the summer off. *With pay.*

VIRGO ♍ *August 23–September 22*

You Virgos hate to be viewed as escapists, preferring instead to appear as pressed as a school uniform and as industrious as a bee. You're also masters of rationalization. As of May 1, Jupiter is moving forward in your sign. That gives you more time to obsess about or escape from work, helps you be more upbeat, and makes you, with your natural cracker-barrel philosophy and night-nurse cheerfulness, an inspiration to others. There is another angle, however. When Jupiter is in your sign, if you're having lunch on the railroad tracks and hear the train whistle, you'll go right on drinking your herbal tea.

LIBRA ♎ *September 23–October 23*

This is a 7th-house moment for you, and that means dealing with the aggressive people around you. No sweat. With Jupiter in your 12th house, your enemies don't stand a chance. The full moon in your sign on April 18 will bring back memories, images, photos, and ghosts of the 1982–83 Saturn-Pluto conjunction. You'll be remembering other times, other lives, this Passover-Easter season. Looking back, you'll see that it was during this period that your family life was transformed forever and that you realized there was a bigger picture to consider. Go easy, though; it could definitely be a four-hankie holiday.

SCORPIO ♏ *October 24–November 21*

New friends will help you in whatever you want to do. In the last year you've widened your scope of influence. Oddly, though, you envy people with normal families and safe lives. Yet deep down you know that's not you, despite your straight image. Yours has to be a creative life. Some Scorpios, of course, don't *do* anything creative themselves; they just drag their kids around to art classes and dancing school. With Mars in Pisces all April, you may certainly be into the young ones, but as Uranus and Neptune go retro in your 3rd house, you'll realize you could never be happy only matching paint chips with fabric swatches.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ *November 22–December 21*

Be grateful for what you've achieved up to this point. At the beginning of May, Jupiter, the planet that rules your sun and gives you a yen for high-cholesterol snacks, is at the top of your solar chart. Enjoy the support and encouragement you'll be getting from the rich and famous. If your kitchen is torn up by plumbers, with Mars in your 4th house you can embrace the chaos. Financially speaking, be philosophical if just when the dice are really hot in your hands the casino closes and your winning streak stops as if somebody had taken a wrench and shut off the tap. Don't think for a minute the good times are over. They aren't.

CAPRICORN ♑ *December 22–January 19*

During the eclipse of last January 4 you were all fired up with your new mission: freedom. To have a will of your own seemed such an attractive notion. Well, you've reached the end of the first semester of your new life, and it's time to step back and, without screaming, look at the path you took. During the third week of April, Uranus and Neptune, the planets of liberation, upheaval, and paralysis, halt your rush forward at the head of the wolf pack, and you're sure to doubt your choices. But there is no sense wishing you could return to the security of Big Brother's umbrella. Don't forget—you were suffocating under it.

AQUARIUS ♒ *January 20–February 18*

Now more than ever you have to tip your golf hat, smile for the birdie, and pretend not even to understand the mad, mad vicissitudes of existence on earth. Two disparate but powerful forces are operating in your life. Saturn in Aquarius is giving you the feeling that the world is your oyster and that all you have to do is go for it. But Uranus and Neptune are retrograde in your 12th house, foiling your plans for world domination and reminding you that, although the world may indeed be your oyster, you shouldn't eat oysters in any month that doesn't have an *r* in it. That means May.

PISCES ♓ *February 19–March 20*

Just your luck. As Mars transits your sign (through May 2) and you're finally getting up steam to confront the world, Uranus and Neptune go retrograde. Then Saturn crawls through your 12th house, undermining your motivation. If only the rest of the world would synchronize its actions with your metabolism, you could get a lot more done. The rest of humanity, however, is on a totally different wavelength. You do have options. Instead of banging your tin cup on the bars of your cell, you could devote yourself to art. It was probably during a Mars transit that Michelangelo, a Pisces, broke the back of the Sistine Chapel.

ARIES ♈ *March 21–April 19*

Some Arians dutifully take their coupons to the supermarket and methodically plan vacations, but most prefer to fly down the aisles, tossing items into the cart, and to change even absolutely nonrefundable tickets at the last minute. Well, be prepared for the tables to turn. When Neptune and Uranus go retro in your 10th house on April 20 and 21, respectively, the nag from the rear will take the lead by six lengths, while sure bets will fizzle out on the first turn. Mars is in Pisces until shortly before Mother's Day, so don't pay any attention to feelings of guilt or failure. Just go on singing in the shower.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM SHEAFFER

By Michael Lutin



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Pola Negri

Vanity Fair
August 1921

In 1921, Pola Negri, the twenty-three-year-old Polish siren, was busy seducing Berlin. A former dancer with the Imperial Ballet, she dazzled onstage with Max Reinhardt's legendary Deutsches Theater and on-screen with director Ernst Lubitsch at UFA, Germany's answer to MGM. In 1922 she became Hollywood's first resident European movie queen—a role she was made for. She paraded down Sunset Boulevard with a pet tiger, had her dressing-room floor strewn with orchid petals, and tempestuously romanced Charlie Chaplin and Rudolph Valentino. (Wags called her flamboyant swoon at the Sheik's funeral her finest performance.) Then there were her two husbands—a count and a prince—and rumors of an affair with the *Führer*, which the star's wardrobe mistress scrapped by declaring, "Miss Negri is herself a dictator. She would never take orders from Hitler." But all the Hollywood babble overshadowed Negri's artistic *Weltschmerz*—this was, after all, a woman who palled around with Richard Strauss and George Bernard Shaw—and she was never to re-create the magic of the films she made for UFA, whose pre-war "dream factory" will be featured in cabaret in Washington, D.C., this month as part of the Kennedy Center tribute to Germany.

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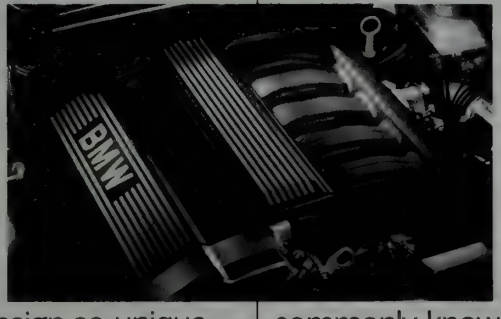
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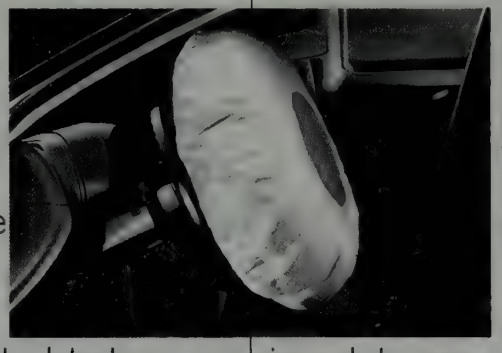
Beneath the beguiling skin of the new BMW 325is Coupe, one can find the very latest in automotive technology and engineering. Technology not simply for the sake of technology, however, but technology for the sake of the one automotive component the engineers at BMW steadfastly refuse to design into obsolescence. The driver.



Take the 325is rear suspension, for example. A design so unique it's been patented, this multi-link system increases straight-line and lane-change stability and reduces both squat and dive, while still maintaining the perfect ride-quality balance. A ride not so harsh as to be uncomfortable, but not so soft as to insulate the driver from the road. A traditional BMW virtue that, when combined with engine-speed-sensitive, variable-assist power steering translates to a better overall "feel" for the pavement traveling beneath the tires.

Which translates to better control. Which leads us to the engine.

Perhaps one of the few actual examples of better living through science, this new engine needs little regular maintenance beyond the routine changing of oil, filters and spark plugs. Additionally, an advanced diagnostic system has been incorporated to allow the BMW technician to "play back" past engine events, making it easy to pinpoint problems that could be difficult to detect.



But what's truly remarkable about this engine is that its economy of maintenance has not resulted in an equal economy of horsepower. Press your right foot down. The words "low maintenance" will not be the ones that come to mind.

Inside the 325is you'll find something not normally associated with two doors... room. Legroom. Headroom. Elbowroom. Even room in that place commonly known as automotive purgatory, the back seat.

Front seats offer firm support. There are separate interior temperature controls for both driver and passenger. And all controls are easy to read and even easier to use thanks to a center console that is canted toward the driver in true—not to mention much-copied—BMW ergonomic style.

And wherever you go, you can breathe easier.

The Coupe's integrated environmental control system contains a rather ingenious microfiltration unit that actually removes dust, pollen and odors before they even reach the occupants.

Surrounding the 325is "user-friendly" interior is an exterior designed to protect what's inside from what may happen outside.

The ultra-rigid, strategically reinforced steel body is stronger than any other 3-Series in history. And in the event of an unavoidable frontal impact, the 325is is ready to respond — by automatically launching a sequence of events designed to minimize potential occupant injuries.

Hydraulic bumpers absorb a portion of the impact, as do the BMW "crush tubes" they're attached to. Front and rear body panels absorb still more energy.

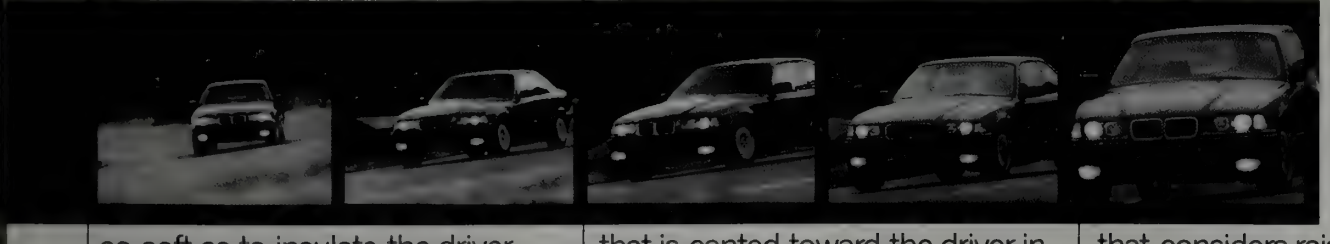
Inside the car, safety belts automatically tighten their grip. And to ensure proper deployment, the driver's-side airbag is activated by three separate sensors with gold-plated connectors.

Even the interior lights are turned on and the doors unlocked to assist the occupants should an escape or rescue become necessary.

As for the exterior styling of the 325is, those lines should certainly speak for themselves.

Volumes, no doubt.

Of course, to fully understand the difference between *what* you drive and *how* you drive, you need to get out of what you're driving and get behind the wheel of the new 325is Coupe from BMW.



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THE NEW BMW


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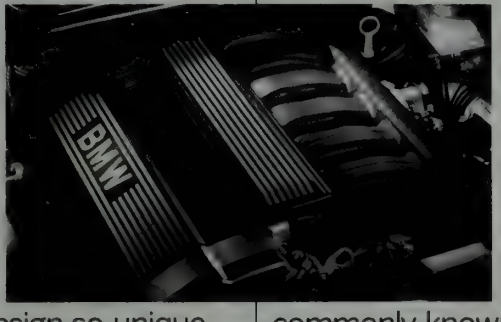
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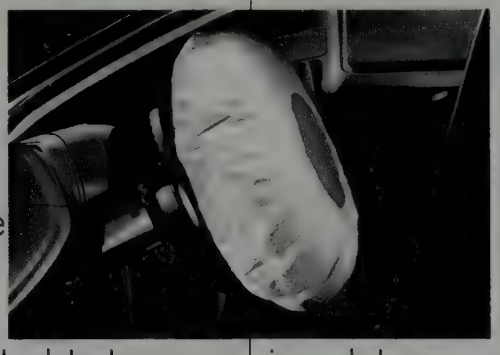
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Which translates to better control. Which leads us to the engine.

Perhaps one of the few actual examples of better living through science, this new engine needs little regular maintenance beyond the routine changing of oil, filters and spark plugs. Additionally, an advanced diagnostic system has been incorporated to allow the BMW technician to "play back" past engine events, making it easy to pinpoint problems that could be difficult to detect.



But what's truly remarkable about this engine is that its economy of maintenance has not resulted in an equal economy of horsepower. Press your right foot down. The words "low maintenance" will not be the ones that come to mind.

Inside the 325is you'll find something not normally associated with two doors... room. Legroom. Headroom. Elbowroom. Even room in that place commonly known as automotive purgatory, the back seat.

Front seats offer firm support. There are separate interior temperature controls for both driver and passenger. And all controls are easy to read and even easier to use thanks to a center console that is canted toward the driver in true—not to mention much-copied—BMW ergonomic style.

And wherever you go, you can breathe easier.

The Coupe's integrated environmental control system contains a rather ingenious microfiltration unit that actually removes dust, pollen and most odors before they even reach the occupants.

Surrounding the 325is "user-friendly" interior is an exterior designed to protect what's inside from what may happen outside.

The ultra-rigid, strategically reinforced steel body is stronger than any other 3-Series in history. And in the event of an unavoidable frontal impact, the 325is is ready to respond — by automatically launching a sequence of events designed to minimize potential occupant injuries.

Hydraulic bumpers absorb a portion of the impact, as do the BMW "crush tubes" they're attached to. Front and rear body panels absorb still more energy.

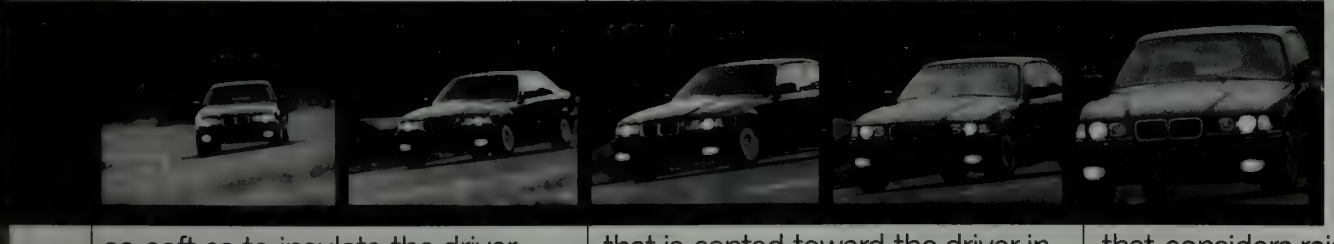
Inside the car, safety belts automatically tighten their grip. And to ensure proper deployment, the driver's-side airbag is activated by three separate sensors with gold-plated connectors.

Even the interior lights are turned on and the doors unlocked to assist the occupants should an escape or rescue become necessary.

As for the exterior styling of the 325is, those lines should certainly speak for themselves.

Volumes, no doubt.

Of course, to fully understand the difference between *what* you drive and *how* you drive, you need to get out of what you're driving and get behind the wheel of the new 325is Coupe from BMW.



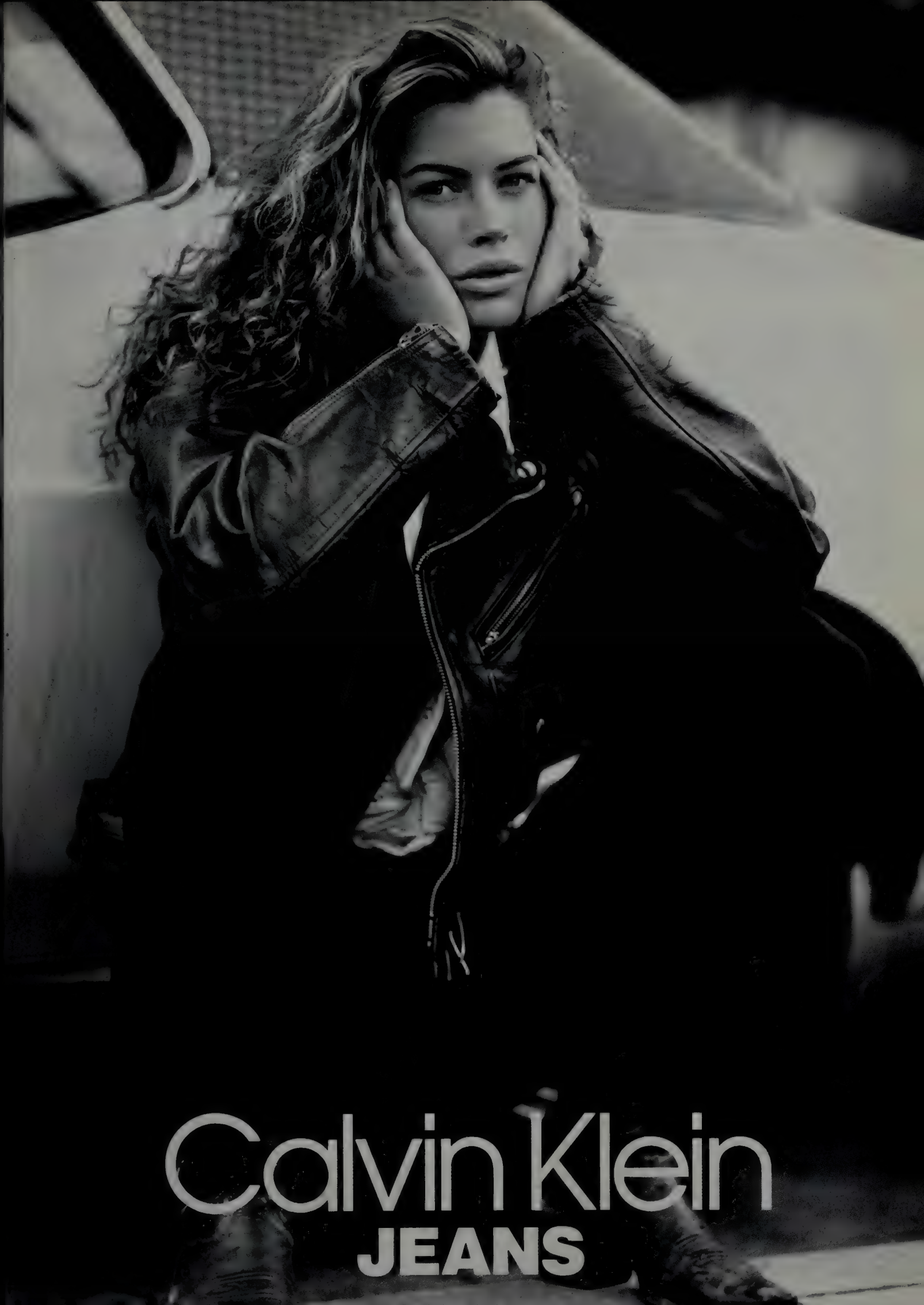
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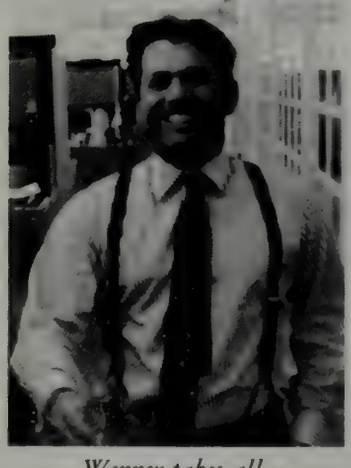
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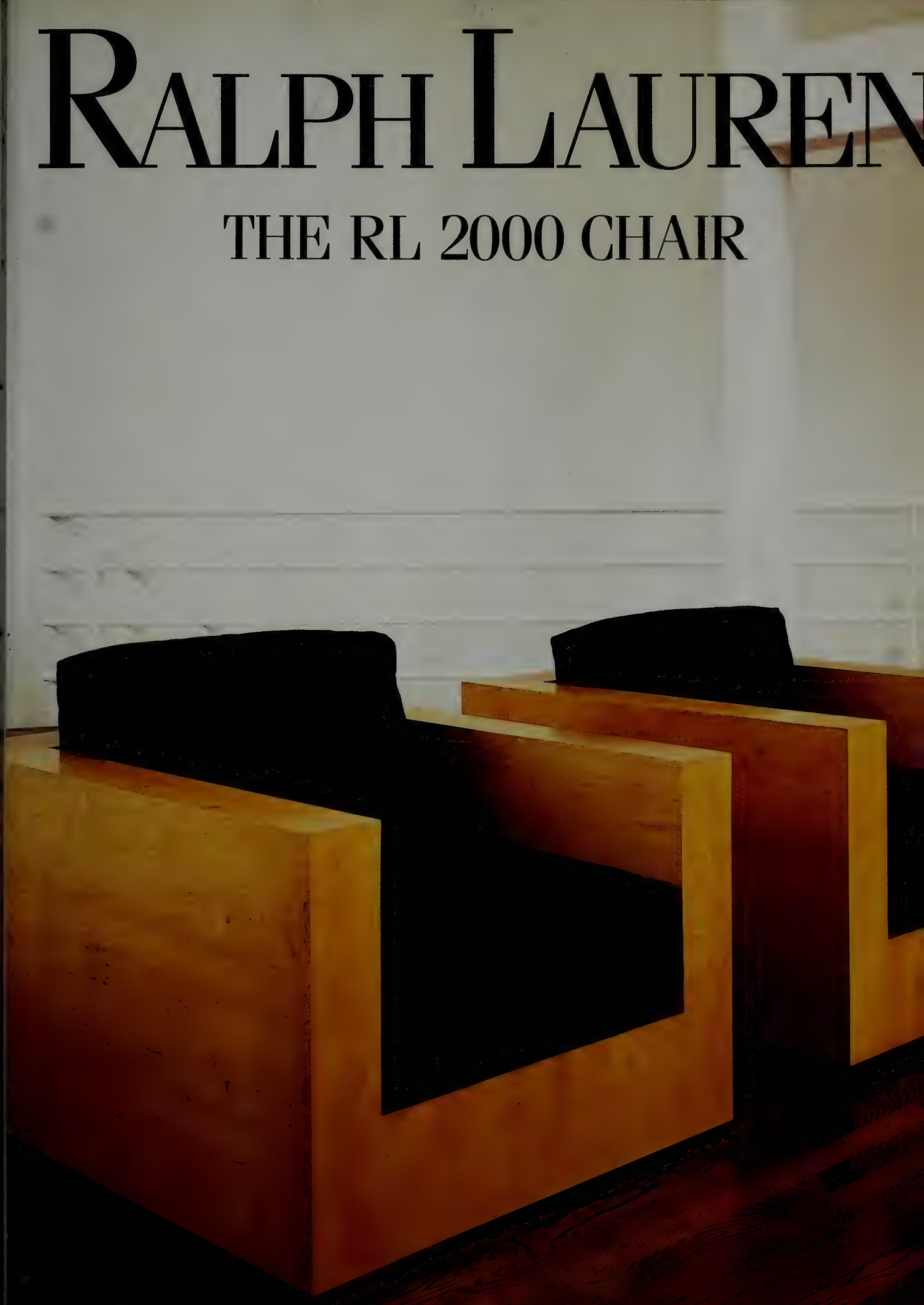
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Editor's Letter

Final Comeback?



TIM SHEAFFER

Annie Leibovitz was on the South Lawn of the White House with her camera when the thirty-seventh president ducked into the helicopter that whisked him away for his last ride on Air Force One and the first taste of his new life in exile. On the twentieth anniversary of the "third-rate burglary" that brought him down, Leibovitz summons up the ghosts of Watergate in a haunting portfolio.

The irony is that, while all the president's men have vanished into the margins, Richard Milhous Nixon has not. The former president contends that history is only "ripe" after fifty years, but as Michael R. Beschloss relates on page 114, he has done an extraordinary job of reshaping his own image in less than half that time. Beschloss, historian and author most recently of *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963,* talked with Nixon at his mock-Tudor New Jersey town house weeks before the striking moment he reoriented American foreign policy toward Russia. On March 10, 1992, Nixon leaked a memo that needled President Bush for failing to sustain Boris Yeltsin's struggling democracy. Nixon's break with Bush was heralded on the front page of *The New York Times* and led three network newscasts. Instead of reacting angrily, Bush quickly announced he completely agreed with Nixon and soon after unveiled a new foreign-aid package. That same week, Bush became the first president to speak on the same podium as Nixon since his fall from grace, at a dinner for the Nixon Library. There is an eerie symmetry to the rise, fall, and rise of Nixon: his power was unraveled by the press and he has used the press to engineer his "final comeback."

Annie Leibovitz's portfolio was produced by *Vanity Fair*'s Washington editor, Susan Mercandetti, who persuaded all to face the camera again—except John and Maureen Dean, who resolutely refuse to share ink with G. Gordon Liddy. (John Dean is currently suing Liddy over his allegations that Dean was the mastermind behind Watergate.)

Looking at the pictures of the repenters, only one thing is missing: the sound track of Nixon's voice on the Oval Office tapes—cynical, paranoid, vindictive, and profane—the voice that chilled a generation.

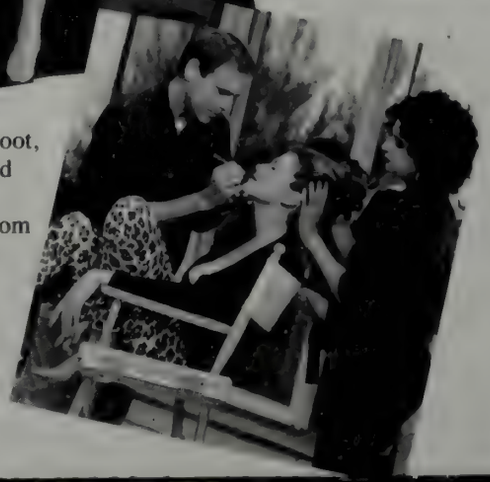
Tina Brown

Editor in chief

Cover

Annette Again





All frills, Annette, *above,* is sitting pretty in a dress by Jil Sander and shoes by Susan Bennis Warren Edwards. *Right,* at the Los Angeles photo shoot, Bening, in a shirt by Karl Lagerfeld for Chanel and leggings by Tapemeasure, gets the treatment from makeup artist George Newell, left, and hairstylist Deanna, right.

On the cover, Annette Bening wears a dress by Norma Kamali, stockings by Fogal of Switzerland, and earrings and a necklace by Cathy Waterman, and she sits in a chair from Shabby Chic. Hair by Deanna for Dorie Sherman, Inc. Makeup by George Newell for George Newell, Inc. Styled by Lori Goldstein. Photographed exclusively for *V.F.* by Annie Leibovitz.





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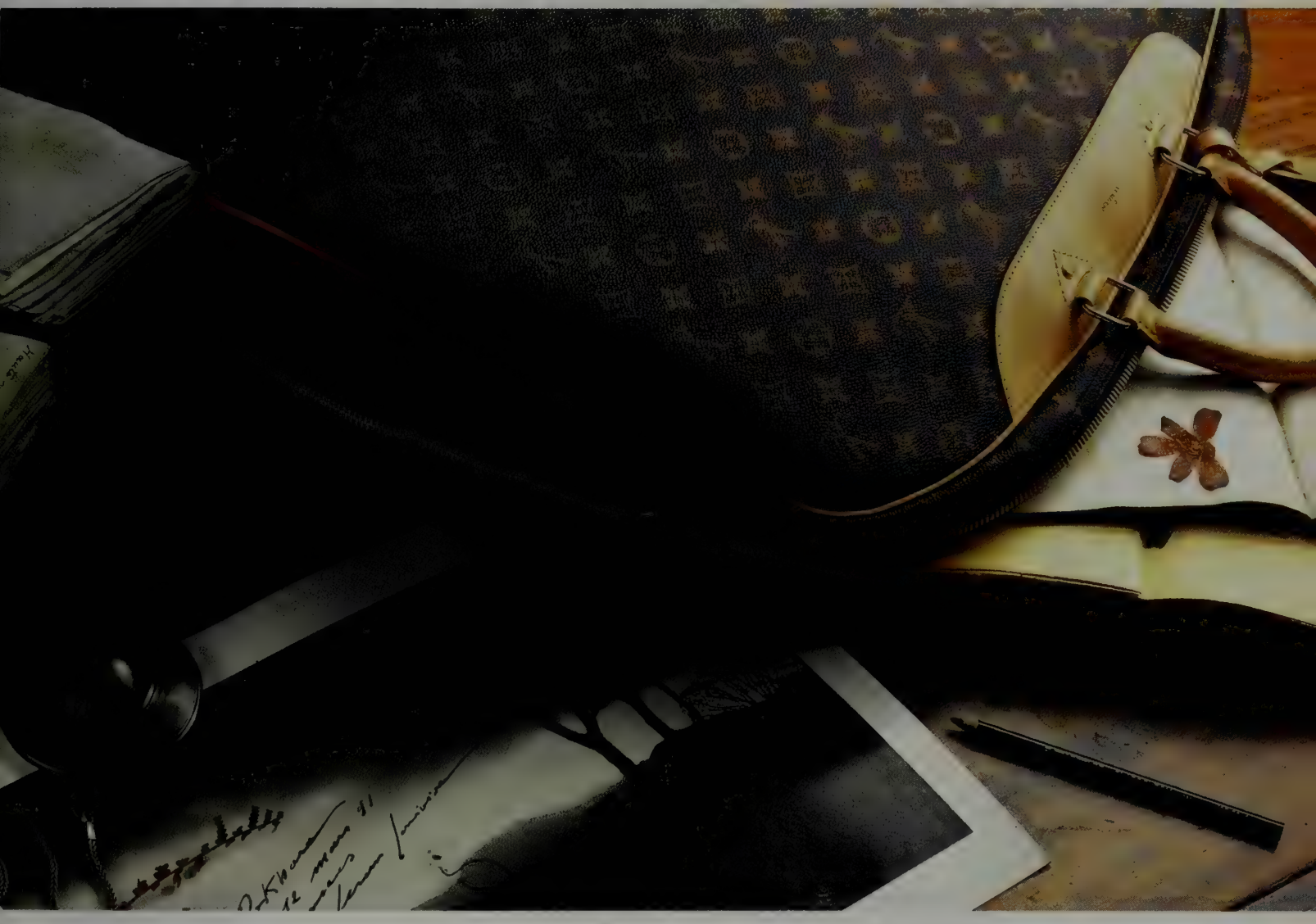
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Contributors

Michael R. Beschloss is the author of *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963*, which is just out in paperback from HarperPerennial.

Sidney Blumenthal, a senior editor at *The New Republic*, is covering the 1992 presidential election and analyzes the powerful role that rumor and innuendo have played in this race. "The spin is out of control," says Blumenthal. "The undercurrents of the campaign, more than anything else, have created the image of Bill Clinton."

Ben Brantley reports regularly from New York, Los Angeles, and Europe.

Joan Juliet Buck is a movie critic for *Vogue* and the author of two novels, *The Only Place to Be* and *Daughter of the Swan*.

Fredric Dannen covered France's dictators-in-residence for *V.F.*'s April 1992 issue. "We will probably never know for certain whether John Demjanjuk was guilty of war crimes," says Dannen of his piece this month, "but we do know that our own government was guilty of questionable judgment and conduct in creating the case against him. The result, I fear, will be more fuel for the sick-minded Holocaust deniers."

Edward Klein is writing a screenplay on the life of Ingrid Bergman. He frequently covers the media for *V.F.*

Annie Leibovitz's *Photographs 1970–1990* will be published by HarperPerennial in softcover this fall.

Arthur Lubow's biography of Richard Harding Davis, *The Reporter Who Would Be King* (Scribner's), will be out next month.

Susan Mercandetti, *V.F.*'s Washington editor, found the subjects of this month's photo essay on the twentieth anniversary of Watergate a little wary at first. "I think they would rather have heard from the Devil himself than from the media," says Mercandetti. "They've all moved on, sheltering themselves in the cocoon of their new lives."

Ron Rosenbaum's May 1991 *V.F.* piece on the trial of Dr. Jack Kevorkian was recently nominated for a National Magazine Award. His latest book, *Travels with Dr. Death and Other Unusual Investigations*, is out from Viking Penguin.

Stephen Schiff, *V.F.*'s critic-at-large, frequently covers cultural subjects.

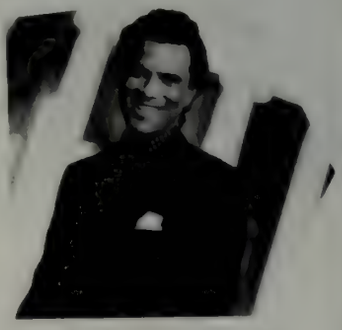
James Wolcott recently appeared on *Edge*, the PBS series about pop culture.



Annie Leibovitz on all the president's men, page 97.



Stephen Schiff on Rolling Stone *patriarch Jann Wenner, page 124.*



Michael R. Beschloss on the resurrection of Richard M. Nixon, page 114.



Susan Mercandetti on the Watergate alumni's twenty-year reunion, page 97.



Deciding Factor.

Today, the question about sun block is not whether to use it, but how high an SPF. Clinique's guiding dermatologists say SPF 15 is good.

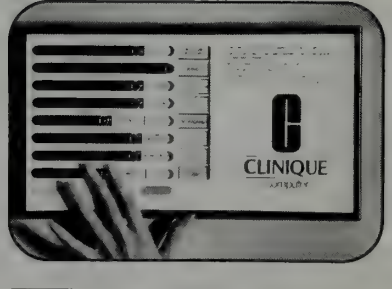
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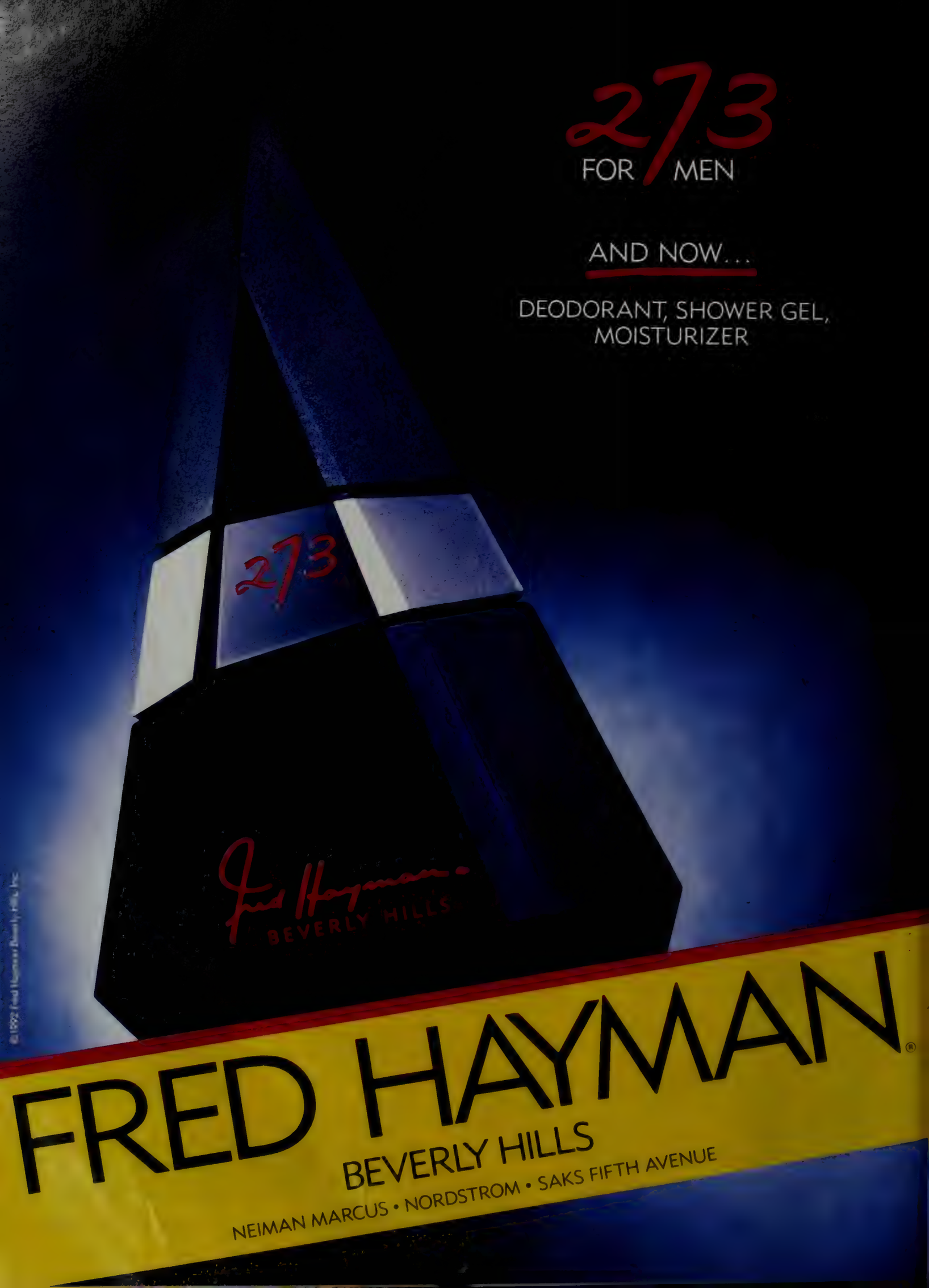
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-Autoweek, August, '91

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-Automotive Industries, December, '91



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Letters

READERS BITE BACK



The Sound and the *Führer*

Ron Rosenbaum's article on Geli Raubal's mysterious death ["Hitler's Doomed Angel," April] is one of the most fascinating pieces of journalism I have ever read. To me, it's the most stunning *V.F.* article since the one concerning the children, now grown, of Hitler's chief aides and confidants ["Children of the Reich," by Gitta Sereny, July 1990]. These pieces on one of the world's darkest eras are surpassed by nothing in my experience.

JAMES V. HENDERSON
Portland, Oregon

Rosenbaum's article was precise, concise, nonjudgmental, and sensitive—even regarding Hitler himself in his early life.

ELIZABETH POLLINO
Alhambra, California

Reading of Geli's death and knowing of Hitler's subsequent murderous rampage reminded me of the death of Joseph Stalin's wife—allegedly a suicide as well—which seemed to begin *his* murderous rampage. Is this more than coincidence?

SUSAN E. WILSON
New York, New York

Isn't Hitler's sexuality beside the point? Are we to assume that the Civil War was the result of Abe Lincoln's frustration with Mary Todd, or that the Bay of Pigs can be blamed on Jackie Kennedy? Must David Duke and Pat Buchanan be bedmates to advocate the same things? World War II and the Holocaust occurred because the times were right for them, and people—millions of people—allowed Hitler to set them in motion.

ALEXANDER WALLACE
Portland, Maine

Tina and Sympathy

As a costume designer, a recent mother, and a person who has lost several dear friends to AIDS, I found Maureen Orth's article on Tina Chow ["Ciao, Tina," April] beautiful and haunting. It made me cry, and it made me realize that virtually nothing has been done to assist women who contract AIDS.

GAMILA FAKHRY
Malibu, California

Maureen Orth's sensitivity and sense of caring touched my heartstrings. I have AIDS myself, and I can't think of a better way of memorializing a person's death than with an article that sheds a light on that person's life. That is what Orth did for Tina Chow.

JEFF U. REYNOLDS
Los Angeles, California

Reading the article made me recall the day I met Tina Chow. She was volunteering in the Project Angel Food kitchen in Los Angeles. I had no knowledge of her history or notoriety, but in her amazing way she took me into her confidence and we began a long conversation, covering everything from Nantucket pubs to Hindu mythology. She told me how much she had enjoyed reading the Mahabharata. When I explained that I found the Indian epic too ethereal for my linear thinking, she implored me to read it again, but this time as if I were a Pan-

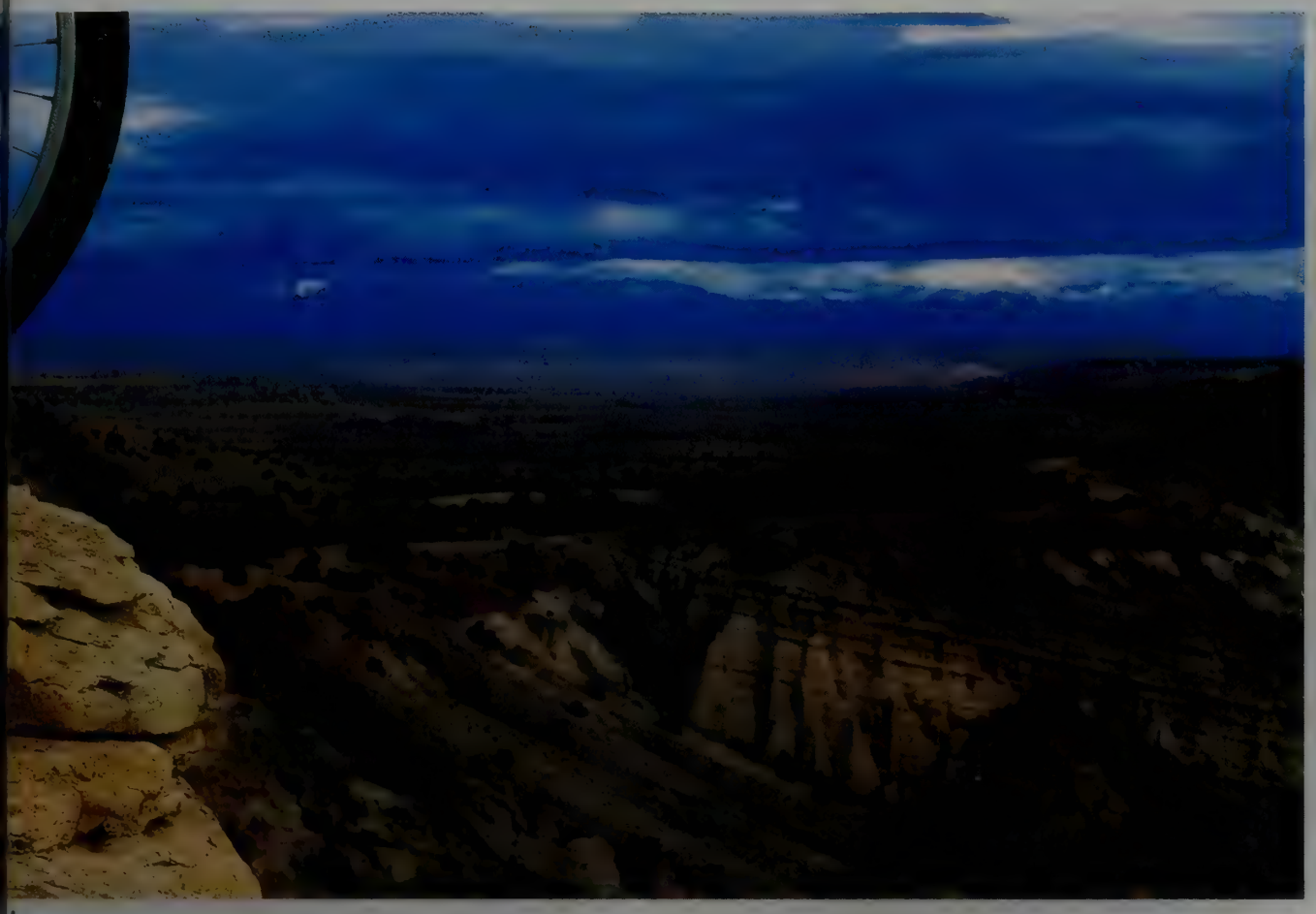
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As he stood dangerously close to the edge, I thought it was a good time to ask him about that weekend he spent with Debbie Morgan.

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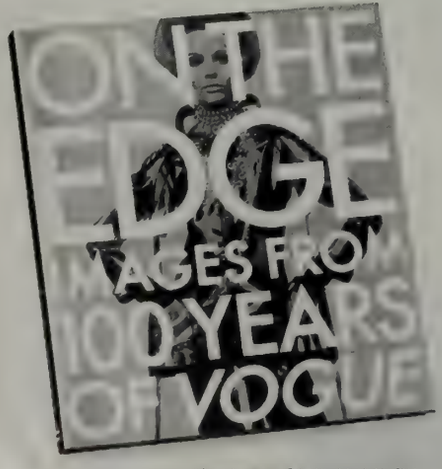


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dava warrior on my way to Kurukshetra. Well, I reread the work and found it just as tedious as the first time, but one line in it stood out as a perfect description of Tina: "It is better to blaze up, even for a moment, than to smolder forever with desire." Tina always struck me as a woman who gave everything to her projects.

GEOFF BLAIN
Los Angeles, California

Sheila Metzner's photograph of Tina Chow in Pacific Palisades conveyed a sense of grace in the face of death. It suggested that death is as natural to us as life, and that we face our mortality daily, whether we recognize it or not.

RAYLENE A. RHODES
Leucadia, California

Maureen Orth's article reminded me of what my mother would say when it rained. She would say that it was raining because the angels in heaven were crying. The day I read Orth's article, it rained all day.

ANDERSON STONE
Glendale, California

Tina Chow had style inside and out. I met her once, only briefly, in New York City in 1985, when I was a student at the Fashion Institute of Technology, but she took the time to be helpful. The fashion world has lost a brave and beautiful woman.

STEVE QUILES
Smithtown, New York

Jumping Jack

What a great article on Jack Nicholson ["Happy Jack," by Nancy Collins, April]! Thoughtful, informative, and well written, it provided rare insight into a complex, humane, funny, and very, very smart man who deserves all the happiness in the world. What a guy! Not a phony bone in his body. Full of patience, goodwill, and passion in a world woefully lacking in all of the above.

KEVIN McCLUSKEY
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

Nicholson's opinion that Gary Hart would be the best candidate to run against Bush is debatable. Regardless, Hart's fall from grace did not happen simply because he "fucks," as Nicholson put it; the point is that the person he was fucking was not his wife. Nicholson may find it provincial, but many Americans do believe in marital fidelity. A presidential candidate who engages in behavior—on the campaign trail—that he should know is disapproved of by much of the electorate is displaying a serious lack of judgment. That perceived lack of judgment is what did in Gary Hart.

CHERYL MALKEMUS
Galliano, Louisiana

Jack Nicholson—what an absolutely positive, caring, sincere, organized, spontaneous, interesting, *intriguing* person he is! I am thoroughly impressed with the way he handles himself and his ability to add a little humor to everything.

JOCELYN HUMPHREY
Granada Hills, California

As much as I admire Jack Nicholson's work, some of his attitudes surprise me. The tragedy of AIDS is that kids age twenty-five haven't had a good sex life? How about the kids who are going to die? That more couples would choose to live apart if they were honest? Does that mean just those with enough money to maintain two homes, not one?

IRENE C. GRAVINA
Bedford, Massachusetts

I was pleased that Nancy Collins indicated the emotional side of Jack Nicholson. My nephew, Frank Painter, was a fan of *Batman*, especially Nicholson's Joker. Frank was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor last year, and has since died. While he was undergoing treatment, Jack called him and sent him photos of himself as the Joker. He kept in contact—talking about kid things, common interests—and asked if he could do anything for Frank. The joy that Nicholson gave to this terminally ill child was so out of character from what I expected that I have told countless people about his generosity and humanity. It is so easy to assume that we as the viewing public know "the truth" about celebrities. My family is thrilled to know the caring Jack Nicholson.

JEANE BOUTELL SLUSHER
Fairway, Kansas

Congratulations to Jack Nicholson for his brilliant transition from the socially conscious sixties to the Me Decade. His wealth affords him a family in one house and his bachelorhood in a second. Mr. Rebel is now the epitome of Mr. Holly-



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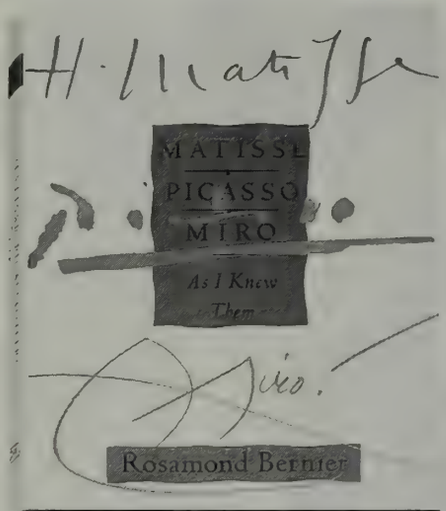
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wood. What next? Gold chains and a Ferrari?

RICHARD RUSS
New York, New York

Lit Fit

I was fascinated by the twin psychedelic caricatures, one of my profile with pipe, the other of my new critical book, *Talents and Technicians*, that appear in your April issue ["Captain America Strikes Again," by James Wolcott]. The profile was fairly recognizable, but the book was not. Wolcott covers two pages of the magazine with his peculiar brand of smarty-speak without once describing what the book is mainly about: the sameness of style and content in the work of some of our better-known younger fiction writers, a condition I attribute in part to the homogenizing influence of the many graduate writing programs. My subtitle, *Literary Chic and the New Assembly-Line Fiction*, should have made this clear.

Yet not only does Wolcott ignore the book's stated intention, but he accuses me of *wanting* the writers discussed to be all alike when obviously I am arguing for the exact opposite and single out for praise those few who show original talent and individuality and whose work *does not* conform to the fashionable stereotype.

Wolcott also quotes a statement about me made by Gore Vidal in a twenty-year-old essay in which the novelist savaged certain critics who had written negatively about his or other authors' work. I was included along with John Simon, Robert Brustein, and Richard Gilman because in my first book, *After the Lost Generation*, I devoted a chapter to Vidal's early fiction and found it deficient in dramatic and thematic substance. Vidal suggested that I had moved to Connecticut to gather incriminating material to be used in that book against some of the writers I discussed. The fact is that the book was published in 1951, and I did not move to Connecticut until 1956. So I clearly could not have done research for a book that was already five years in print.

Finally, Wolcott suggests that after the appearance of *After the Lost Generation* I spent years of "dark sleep" in my "icy abode" and have just now awakened to "combat a new generation of deadbeat authors." The truth is that during those years of my supposed somnolence I was somehow able to produce seven books of criticism, social commentary, and fiction along with hundreds of essays and reviews.

JOHN W. ALDRIDGE
Ann Arbor, Michigan

As a creative-writing student, I wonder if John W. Aldridge realizes that he sounds like every old fogy since time immemorial when he talks about young writers today. His prissy dismissal of some of the most creative and innovative talents of our (or any) time just makes me smile. Is he truly such a delicate hothouse flower that a whiff of Kmart atmosphere deadens his soul? As Bob Dylan said, "You better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone."

NAOMI MARTIN
Santa Barbara, California

Performance Heart

Regarding "Live Art," by Annie Leibovitz and Anthony Haden-Guest [April]: The reason Jesse Helms and others try to censor Karen Finley is not "obscenity." They censor her because she tells the truth, loud and clear. And to this administration, that is the greatest obscenity. Throughout history men have tried to gag prophets. If any artist should receive federal funding, it's Finley. She warns us of the danger; she reminds us of the atrocities that most of us try to forget. We should pay the equivalent of the highest government salary for her contribution. We need our artists now more than ever—especially those brave enough to weather the current right-wing storm.

ANNIE-B PARSON
New York, New York

Lyndon Fog

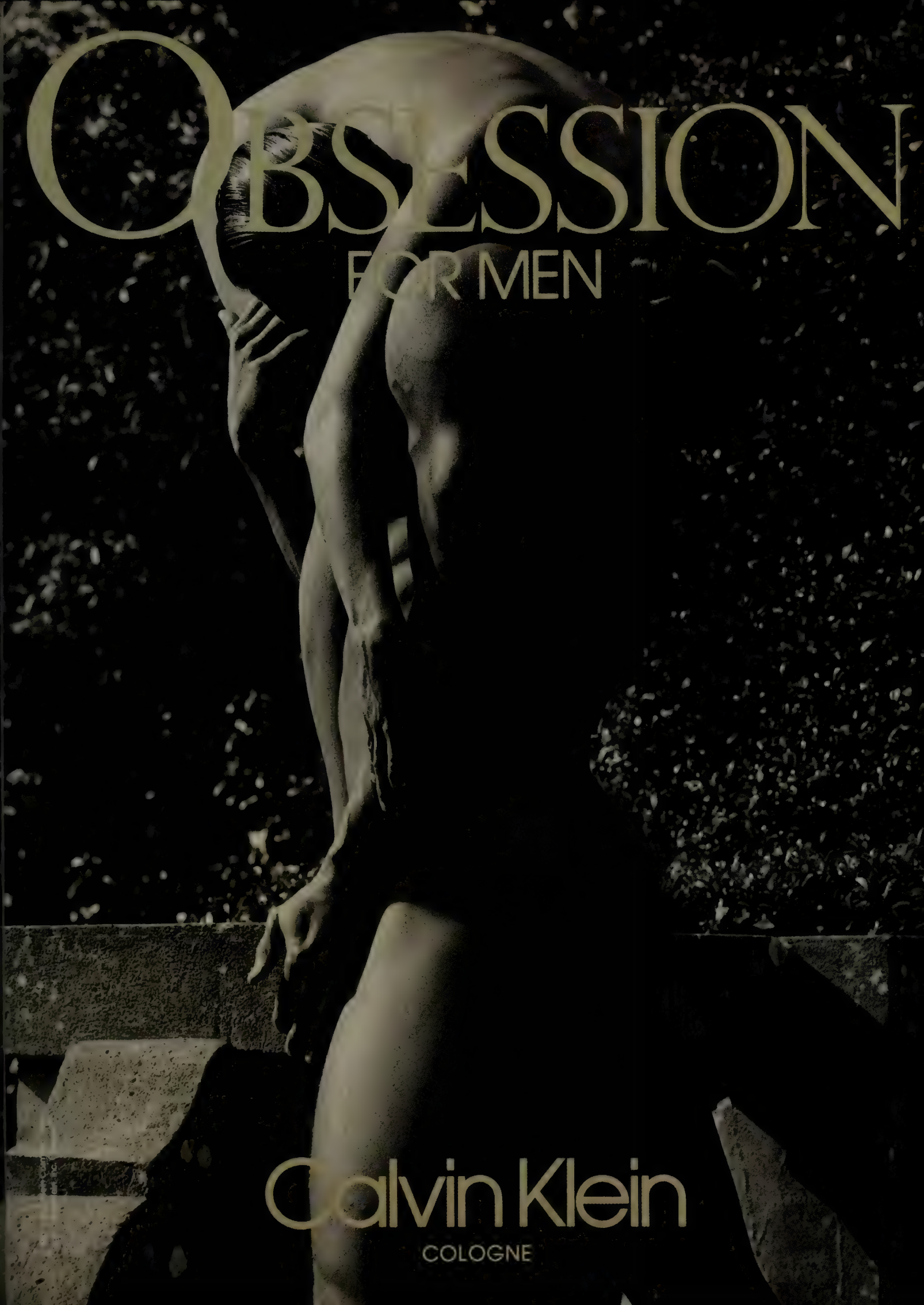
Norman Mailer's "Earl and Lyndon" [April] is a sardonic masterpiece.

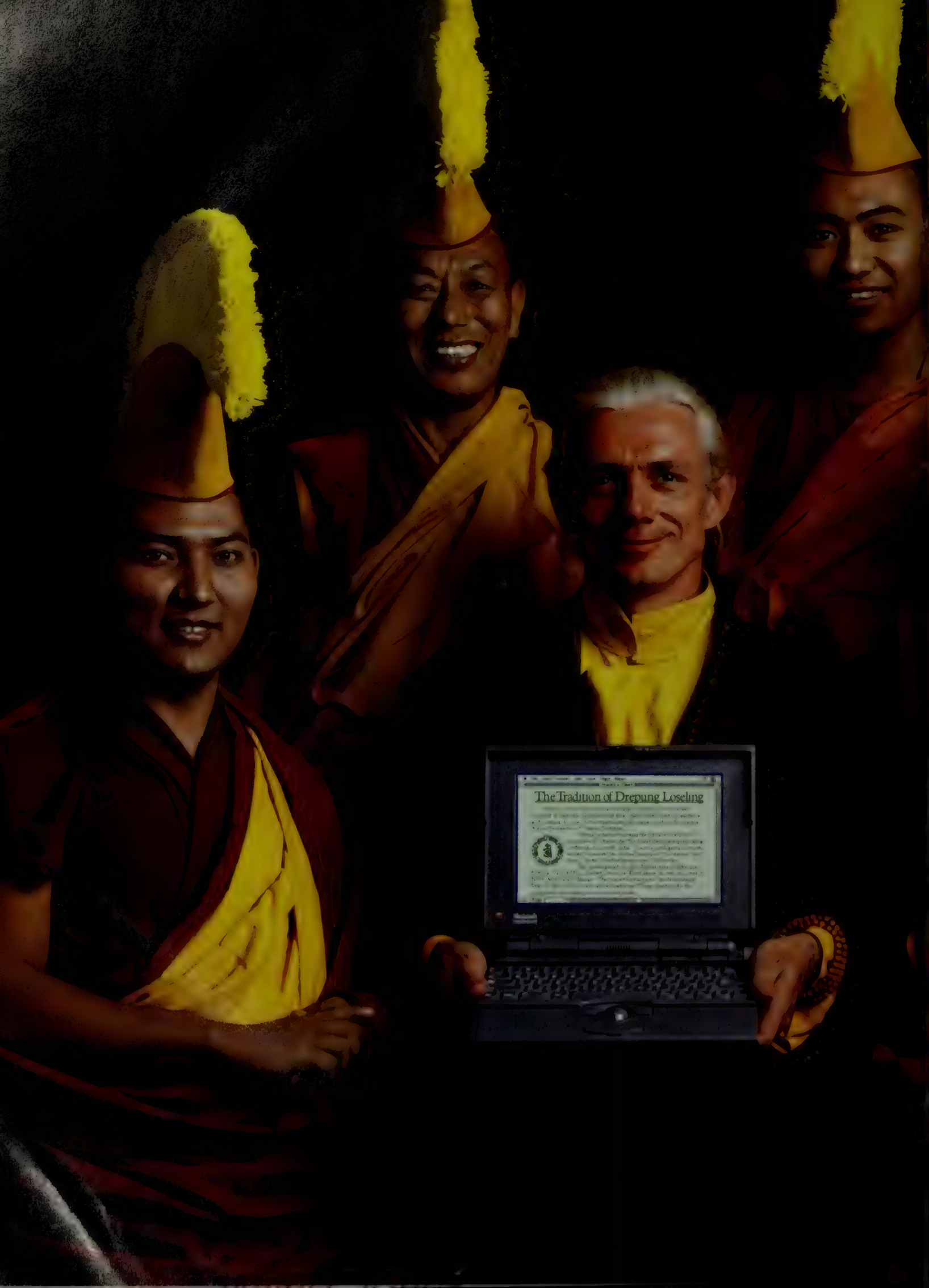
PAULINE PRESLEY
Murphysboro, Illinois

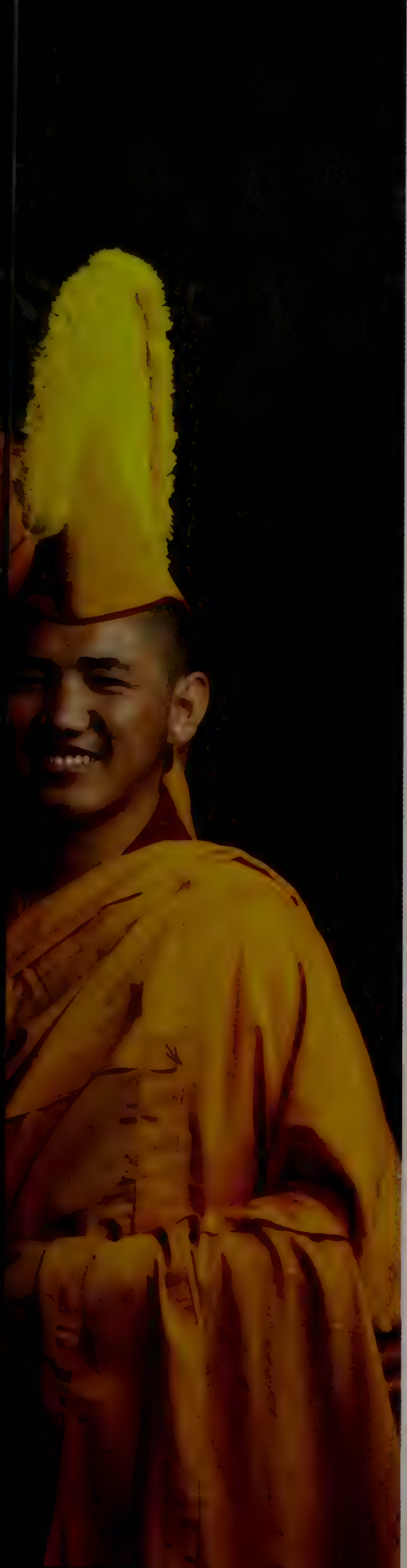
This is a brilliant, hilarious bit of prose, thanks to Mailer's right-on-target dialogue between the somber speech patterns of Warren and the down-home Texas-speak of Johnson. The article is also chilling in that it rings so true.

LYNN CAROL MELLOR
Santa Barbara, California

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OUT AND ABOUT WITH SIR IAN

Why the world's foremost Shakespearean actor, Sir Ian McKellen, who is touring the U.S. as Richard III, considers gay-rights activism to be his finest role

BY BEN BRANTLEY

It was the sort of languid afternoon one gets in London in the early spring, and the browsers who had wandered into the large, sun-emblazoned Nash Room of the Institute of Contemporary Arts exuded a contented aimlessness. Students on holiday casually cruised the eclectic assembly of artworks, from decorative abstracts to extremely topical cartoons. ("Everyone knew I was gay," read the caption on one. "I had to write to the newspaper to say that I was also an actor.") Two young men in standard-issue single earrings and denim nuzzled each other lazily on the balcony overlooking a verdant St. James's Park.

But when the portly man in banker's pinstripes, who seemed surprised to find himself there, started to make a fast exit, he was summarily stopped by a courteous but fierce supplication. "You *will* at least buy a T-shirt, won't you?" The speaker—a lanky, rumpled professorial type who had been fastidiously rearranging the exhibition brochures on the information desk—had an intensely purposeful gleam that promised to overcome any refusal. Moreover, the businessman had recognized the face behind the rectangular spectacles and blushed. "Well, seeing as it's Sir Ian who's telling me to, I suppose I must, mustn't I?" he stammered. He handed over the five quid.

All afternoon, in fact, Sir Ian McKellen—England's pre-eminent interpreter of Shakespeare and the first actor of his generation to receive a knighthood—sustained a brisk, hucksterish energy, reminding everyone who passed him, like a tightly coiled conscience, of the reason for the exhibition: to raise funds for the Iris Trust and the Stonewall Group, the lesbian-and-gay lobbyist organization he co-founded in 1988. And if no one was going to plunk down the £100,000 asked for David Hockney's *Red Flowers and Blue Spots*, each of them could at least manage a fraction of that sum for a T-shirt or a poster with its image (a pound extra if McKellen autographed it for you).

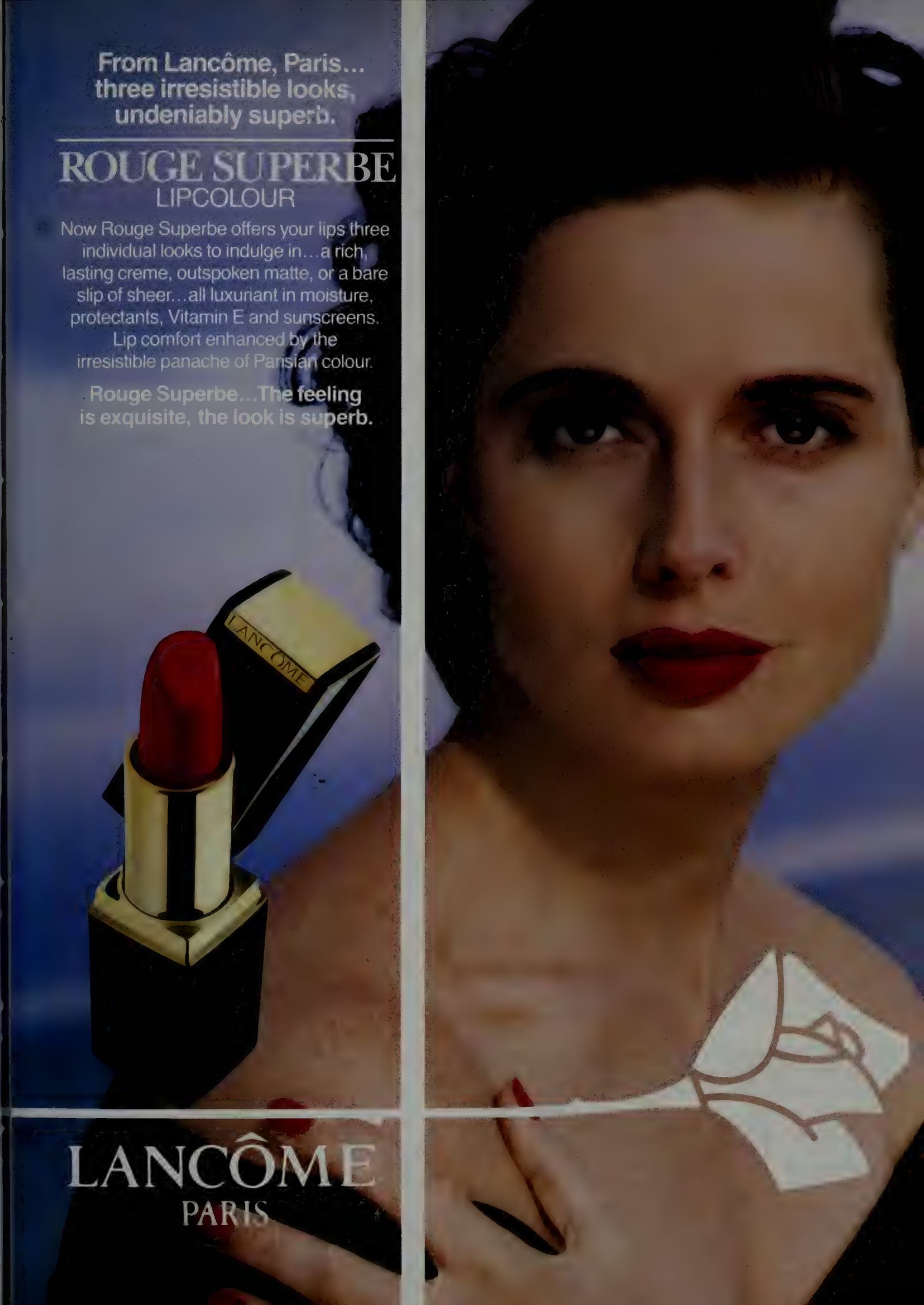
Two nights before, a black-tie-clad McKellen had, amid a roaring ovation, accepted his fifth Laurence Olivier Award for actor of the year, for his performance in the National Theatre production of *Richard III*, getting in, as usual, a dig at government apathy to subsidized theater. (Not that those awards *mean* anything, he told me brusquely when I congratulated him on it.) Now, in baggy pants and Beatle boots, he was pushing T-shirts, posters, and gay rights.

The next day, assessing milestones in his personal and profes-



The actor's actor: "There's been one place that I've taught myself to be in total control of myself—the theater."

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sional lives, he singles out his decision four years ago, at the age of forty-eight, to publicly declare his homosexuality: "Coming out, coming out, coming out. That's the only thing I've ever done, really. That's what it can say on the gravestone. That will be the obituary." The fact that he had spent much of his life as a publicly closeted gay man—though always very comfortably "out" in the theater community and never given to telling interviewers he was simply "waiting for the right girl"—is something for which he continues to flagellate himself. It was, he whispers dramatically, simply "lying."

When Ian McKellen comes to the States this month as producer and star of a sixteen-week tour of *Richard III*—which has been staged by National director Richard Eyre as a dark allegory of twentieth-century fascism, and has previously toured Europe and Japan—he will be presenting not only a stinging portrait of an ice-blooded tyrant but a public persona that America is largely unfamiliar with: a mainstream star who is openly, insistently homosexual. What's more—unlike the outspoken Vanessa Redgrave—he seems to belong to, and be embraced by, the middle-class establishment.

"Coming out. That's the only thing I've ever done, really. That's what it can say on the gravestone."

Since coming out, in response to the introduction of Clause 28 in Parliament—a piece of legislation with strong anti-homosexual elements—he has, as the most visible representative of Stonewall, arduously worked the conventional corridors of power: keeping in touch with a network of sympathetic "moles" in Parliament; writing crisply worded pieces on homophobia for the dailies; appearing on network television as a morally indignant visitor to the Isle of Man while homosexuality was still illegal there; and, most dramatically, meeting with Prime Minister John Major at 10 Downing Street as a spokesman for lesbian and gay rights.

Asked about his personal identification with Richard III—the embittered, ambitious "crookback" who became a king—he answers tellingly, and with his customary academic caution: "You mean, do I think of myself as a misfit? I mean, you know, I think it would be up to somebody else to write this. But I could make a case for saying a gay man who has a mainstream career and is recognized by the Establishment as being one of them is akin to a man with an abject deformity, an abnormality, who is determined to rise to the top of the heap. But"—here, his rough-featured face creases into a mask of exaggerated skepticism—"a *misfit?* I don't know. I've not felt a misfit in quite a long time."

Correspondingly, McKellen's public role, as he sees it, is the gay "communicator with the straight population," embodying "the point of view of a gay man who has functioned in a straight society successfully in the last thirty years." This implicitly nonthreatening presence—and McKellen's willingness to deal with the conservative powers that be—has antagonized more radical elements of the English gay community. When he accepted the knighthood during Margaret Thatcher's administration a year and a half ago, Derek Jarman, the polemical filmmaker who has been a gay activist since the sixties, wrote an incendiary letter to *The Guardian*, accusing McKellen of having been co-opted by a government inimical to the queer cause.

While a dramatic, famous-name-studded letter of support from eighteen British lesbian and gay artists was printed soon after, Jarman remains adamant in his objections. "Yes, Ian has done a great deal of good, but he's also done a great deal of bad," Jarman says today. "Accepting a personal knighthood from Mrs. Thatcher, who's done more to put back the clock of gay rights than anyone in my lifetime . . . was an extraordinary misreading of the role of the activist." Jarman also resents what he sees as the "exclusivity" of Stonewall—a twenty-member organization which does not hold open meetings—and says of McKellen's interview with Major, "Actually, the great and radical thing, if you're going to call yourself Stonewall [named for the 1969 riot in Greenwich Village, initiated by transvestites], would have been to have gone to see the prime minister in a dress."

McKellen wore a suit and tie, of course. He defines himself, after all, as "a conventional sort of person," and says his life-style has been, in many ways, "straight, heterosexual: the two men I had longish [eight-year] relationships with were, in a sense, marriages . . . based on two people living together in the conventional straight way." But he will also tell you, with a hissing vehemence, "I hate to be manipulated by authority. I *hate* authority. I'm part of the Establishment and all that so I can help dismantle it."

The seeming contradictions inherent in this earnest insider-outsider stance are part of the larger paradox that has always been Ian McKellen, a man who, his colleagues will tell you, seems to belong to the theater more completely than anyone they've ever met, yet who periodically draws back to ponder the legitimacy of his profession. "He has to know what the motivating force of life is on an everyday basis," says Sean Mathias, his ex-lover and the director of his recent, triumphant portrayal of the title role of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* at the National. He is also a bravura performer with a star's instinctive narcissism and desire to dominate who nonetheless has twice set up "democratic" actors' companies in which he would play small as well as leading roles; a born politician seemingly made for leadership (it has for years been rumored that he will eventually head the National Theatre, the preeminent state-subsidized institution, which Olivier established in 1963) who is ultimately reluctant to take the reins.

Sitting, appropriately, in the office of Richard Eyre, the National's current head, where we have our first formal interview, McKellen says, "I think if I'd pitched for it, I would have run Richard rather close. . . . But it never crossed my mind to run this building. I don't mind coming here and sitting in his chair while he's not here. But never, never, never. I'm the head boy, not the headmaster. That's how you have to see me. I'm not an initiator. I'm the man who carries the standard. I'm not the general."

Peter Hall, who ran the National during McKellen's first stint there, in the mid-eighties, and who directed the actor's stunning Broadway debut in *Amadeus*, for which he won a Tony in 1981, believes McKellen "loves to hide behind the will of a group, when in fact it is *his* will. . . . I don't think he enjoys the inevitable unpopularity that comes with leadership. . . . Like all of us, he wants to be loved."

McKellen himself, speaking of his "personal connection" with many of Shakespeare's protagonists, offers, "They are people who, however central

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FOR A MAN

they might be to the life of the nation they are leading or wanting to lead, feel somehow inside that they are inadequate to the task."

In fact, McKellen's strength, both onstage and off, *has* been as an interpreter rather than an initiator—someone who follows an established precedent with a boldly individualistic style that transforms, and exalts, the familiar. "There's nobody better at carrying the torch once it's been lit," says Richard Eyre. Just as McKellen has brought new life to an endlessly rendered gallery of Shakespearean heroes, he came out as a homosexual in the wake of earlier declarations by such established British actors as Simon Callow and Michael Cashman, but with a monumental dignity that instantly made him the cause's leading figure. ("My coming out was absolutely, directly linked to his," says Antony Sher, his *Vanya* co-star.) And McKellen admits he needed the external dynamic the movement provided: "I suspect if I hadn't eventually come out because I was gay, then I might have pretended that I was. I was a person looking for a cause."

Accordingly, he seems most comfortable following a script of sorts, bringing his peerless energies and keen, Cambridge-trained powers of textual analysis to pre-existing forms. He is, as Peter Hall notes, "a very complex man who acts a part in public." Offstage—or outside the context of his role as a theatrical spokesman—he is touchingly ungainly. Addressing the subject of McKellen the man, he is given to stammers and long, reflective pauses; his face sheds its charismatic cohesiveness, becoming weary and befuddled; his furry North Country voice booms and fades like a randomly programmed organ; the immense hands seem suddenly like cumbersome props, and he often covers his face with them between sentences. As his friend the actress and director Sheila Hancock notes, "Onstage he can convert himself into anything. In *Coriolanus*, he was like a steel rod. And yet offstage he flops about sort of like an overgrown puppy."

McKellen himself says he is not "an adventurer, not an explorer. And there's been one place in the world that I've taught myself to be not just at home but to be in total control of myself. And that is in the theater. It isn't just that you rehearse a play so that nothing can go wrong, but also having the confidence that I would risk making a fool of myself, cutting myself open and then going out on the stage and showing everybody. . . . But for years that was the only area of my life when I was like that, and that was therefore the only area of my life in which I was fulfilled. . . . That must be connected, mustn't it, with someone whose sexuality is finally undeclared? So if I'd been out—as so many kids are these days, bless their hearts—at eighteen or nineteen, maybe I wouldn't have needed the theater as much as I have done."

As to how, or if, coming out has affected his acting, McKellen is guarded, noting simply that he is a more "self-aware person than I used to be. . . . But that might have happened anyway." Friends and colleagues, however, detect a definite sea change in McKellen the actor, effected, they believe, by the incongruous dual events of his coming out and his receiving the knighthood. Though always known as atypically generous and instructive with the actors he works with, offstage, his friend Peter Eyre (no relation to Richard), the actor and director, notes, "Ian's been quite competitive about other actors who are much, much less good than him but who might be on his territory. . . . And I think, funnily enough, that getting a knighthood is going to do him a lot of good psychologically. Because he doesn't *need* to be competitive anymore."

Richard Eyre thinks that since coming out McKellen has seemed to locate in his performances "a greater range and a more palpable humanity." For years, the principal reservation about his acting has been that the pyrotechnic virtuosity has sometimes masked a central vacuity—a tendency to "indicate," in actors' parlance, rather than *be*. Eyre believes that McKellen would have been incapable four years ago of the poignant, "naturalistic" portrayals of life-beaten losers he gave in the National productions of *Napoli Milionaria* and *Vanya*. "Ian has never been less than a thoroughly dazzling, effective actor," he continues. "But being humane and accessible and moving you is different from being dazzling and effective." McKellen admits that in rehearsals for *Vanya*, "the instruction was always 'Will you stop acting, please, and *feel*.' And so, in not overtly characterizing, Uncle Vanya seemed to be coming from inside me."

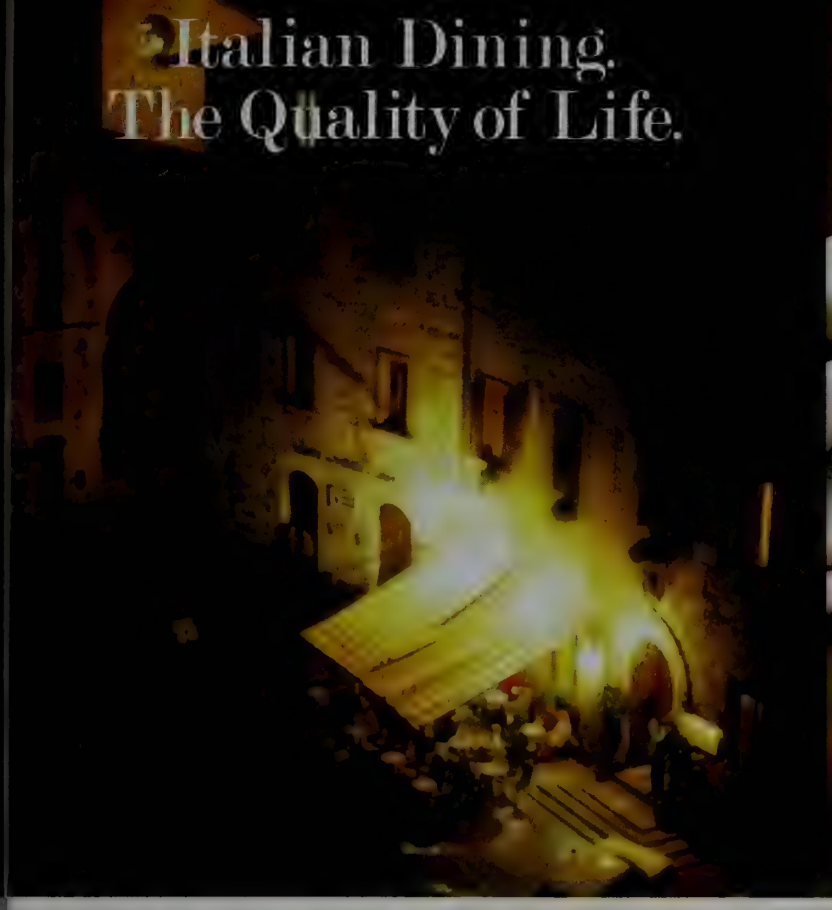
Peter Hall describes McKellen as belonging to "the Olivier tradition—a performer of genius who will do anything. He has great daring. You can also see, as you could with Olivier, the wheels going round. . . . It is only in the last few years that Ian has started to reveal bits of himself that were private and personal. I can best describe it by saying that to me Ralph Richardson was an actor of genius—someone who seemed to be switched into the most complex of human emotions—whereas Olivier was a *performer* of genius. Ian has been like Olivier, but I think he is moving into the great-actor class as he shows more and more of himself. . . . I believe that now that his public and private honesty is one we may be going to see his greatest years."

Accordingly, though well into middle age, McKellen still speaks with the self-searching rigor of a particularly puritanical adolescent. As Toby Robertson, the former director of the Prospect Theatre Company, where McKellen became a star, puts it, "There's the funny feeling that Ian—at fifty-three—is still in many ways very much a young man. You don't feel here's someone of great maturity: the man is yet to come."

"I used to have to pin him down to talk about anything that was to do with an emotion or life," says Sean Mathias, his ex-lover.

The knottily linked identities of performer and reformer were forged early in McKellen. He grew up in small-town northern England, the son of a borough engineer, and the grandson, on both sides of the family, of Nonconformist ministers. His parents, he says, lived their lives, with quiet obduracy, "on a level of principle." (His father was, daringly, a pacifist and conscientious objector during World War II.) Though now an atheist, McKellen says he was deeply influenced by "the Nonconformist conscience."

He was also mesmerized by the music-hall entertainers who would perform locally, as well as by the metamorphic genius of performers he saw at Stratford, such as Peggy Ashcroft. By twelve he was acting regularly in productions at the Bolton School, where, true to form,









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he became head boy. Though he had identified his attraction to men well before adolescence, "at a time when other children were experimenting sexually, I was learning about the technicalities of acting.... It might have been a lot healthier for me if I'd been, you know, having sex"—something which would not occur until he was at university.

Of his mother, who died of breast cancer when McKellen was twelve ("God knows what that did to me"), he says, "My feelings about her were of absolute adoration. She was the emotional center of my life, which was never replaced by my father. He died [in a car accident] when I was twenty-four, just at the point at which I ought to have been getting to know him."

McKellen went on to Cambridge, where his fellow students included such future luminaries as Derek Jacobi and Corin Redgrave—and played twenty-one parts in his nine terms there. Already he was attracting national critical attention, and he slid into professional status with uncommon facility. But it was working with the fabled director Tyrone Guthrie, in Nottingham, that he learned to "dare to do something which would fill a theater." Those who remember watching McKellen throughout the sixties describe him as a breed apart from the dominant school of minimal, realistic performers then in vogue. "He had at that time a kind of bravura thing as an actor which was very different from anybody else," says Peter Eyre.

When he appeared, in the late sixties, with the Prospect company, in performances of a defiantly large-scaled emotional intensity as Shakespeare's melancholy Richard II and Marlowe's flamboyantly gay Edward II, he was heralded as a new, fearless theatrical titan. "The ineffable presence of God Himself enters into Mr. McKellen's Richard," wrote Harold Hobson, the legendary dean of English critics. When the production moved to London, Frank Sinatra was calling to see if someone could possibly get him tickets; Noël Coward and Rudolf Nureyev were showing up in the star's dressing room; John Gielgud sent a congratulatory telegram. And the cries began that here, at last, was a worthy successor to Laurence Olivier.

McKellen himself is studiedly modest about his successes. As Peter Hall observes, "He has an instinctive understanding of how unattractive the necessary ego of a performer must be."



Sir Ian marches in a gay-rights demonstration in London, 1988.

According to Peter Hall, McKellen "loves to hide behind the will of a group, when in fact it is *his* will."

McKellen sloughs off the New Olivier moniker, admitting that he has measured his classical career against that of Sir Laurence but saying that he couldn't possibly be what Olivier was. "He was a Hollywood star, he was a film director, he was a theater impresario, and he was married to the most beautiful woman who ever existed. What have I done? Yes, I played a few of his old parts."

Still, like Olivier, McKellen established his own companies, albeit according to his own Utopian lights. In 1972, with fellow actor Edward Petherbridge, he created the idealistic Actors' Company, a democratic venture run by actors, in which the star roles would be equally shared. McKellen admits that he left it, in part, because he got tired of playing the small roles. A joke from the time: "Did you hear? Ian McKellen's playing the third waiter in the new Actors' Company play." "Really? What's it called?" "*The Third Waiter.*" He and Petherbridge would repeat the attempt—within the institutional structure of the National—in the mid-eighties, an experience he admits drove him to total exhaustion.

From the beginning, he seemed uncannily sure of the direction of his career, always shaped, he insists, with the goal of perfecting his craft. It still seems to rankle him a bit that he never made a great success in films ("Do I envy Albert Finney, or Alan Bates, their careers? Do they envy me? We're just different"), and he allows that he wouldn't mind the film actor's salary. (Working six-performance weeks at the National earns him the equivalent of roughly $1,300.) But the theater, McKellen's friends will tell you, is unconditionally his natural element.

This was evident the afternoon I watched McKellen during technical rehearsals for *Richard III* as he blithely ran the portrayal through an astonishing number of performance levels—from underplayed austerity to Quasimodo-like gargoylishness—periodically breaking off to become McKellen the producer ("Can I just say I think the boots of the soldiers should be much shinier than they are?"). Sheila Hancock notes his "ability to be giving an extraordinary performance and whispering awful things under his breath.... It's just like a child playing a game to him." Because he has principally known only success in the theater, he is, Hancock believes, "flabbergasted" by bad reviews or empty houses. She remembers touring with the National in the States in the mid-eighties and, after "tumultuous success" in other cities, arriving to "terrible indifference" in Chicago. "He took it personally that people weren't queuing round the block to see him.... And Ian went into overdrive, and he was on every radio show, and appearing in every newspaper. And of course in a week it was packed."

He applies the same conscientiousness, and gargantuan energy, to acting itself—methodically shifting between companies and directors, between grand and intimate performances. Directors say he will try absolutely anything in rehearsal and dissect text with the tirelessness of a semiotician, "picking away," as Richard Eyre says, "at the tiny moment." This assiduity has resulted in some of the most freshly conceived, revelatory performances in recent British theater: a glamorous, incandescently power-drunk Macbeth for director Trevor Nunn in 1975; the convention-shedding gay Dachau inmate in Martin Sherman's harrowing *Bent* (in which he first appeared nearly a decade before coming out); and, in 1988, in Nunn's *Othello*, a bracingly military Iago, who plies his mechanical soldier's mind to wreak peacetime havoc. His current Richard III is presented as another out-of-work military man, but on a grander iconographic

Some clothes are like old pals, a little worn, but tough to part with.



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scale. Moving through a stylized world staged to suggest England in the thirties, this Richard—his defect minimized to a withered left arm and a concealed hump, and with a ruling-class lockjaw accent—is elegantly carved in ice with sly, shocking glimmers of psychopathic anger and contempt, unlike the more showily grotesque Richards of yore. Suggesting such period fascistic figures as Oswald Mosley and Edward VIII, he is a political master of hypocrisy. Playing him, says McKellen, was "unnervingly easy."

In interviews from the early eighties on, McKellen began to hint at a basic emptiness in his life, as if acting wasn't enough. He became an increasingly voluble spokesman for causes—subsidized theater, actors' rights. By 1987 (after his second starring stint on Broadway, in *Wild Honey*, a disheartening failure), he was tirelessly giving benefit performances of his one-man show, *Acting Shakespeare*, to raise money for the London Lighthouse, an AIDS hospice. And in January 1988, in a radio debate on Clause 28 with the right-wing editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, he quietly but firmly declared his homosexuality. "He was being very rude about homosexuals, saying why couldn't they stay in their clubs? And I said, 'You mean like the Garrick Club?'—a gentlemen's club of which he's a member which I wouldn't be seen dead in. It turned out that I said I was homosexual, because he was personally offensive. And it was a very good debating point, because it shut him up. And having done it, I've not stopped doing it."

"I thought it was going to be a reaction where people would say, 'How dare you give a knighthood to a poofter?'"

It was conversations with Armistead Maupin, the American novelist, and his lover, Terry Anderson, a gay activist, during a visit to San Francisco in September 1987 that McKellen says finally convinced him of the necessity of coming out. (Maupin jokes that McKellen was, in the tradition of such expatriate Englishmen as Christopher Isherwood and David Hockney, "Californicated" into a greater sense of individual freedom.) They were discussing, McKellen recalls, the "closetedness" of certain Hollywood stars and whether an openly homosexual actor would be limited in "selling his sexuality." He began to realize, as he says, "the fact that I know that a man is straight doesn't stop me fancying him. If that was true, why should it stop a woman fancying me even though she knew I wasn't straight?"

Pondering this, McKellen met with a casting director in Los Angeles, where he was up for a part in a movie, and asked her if she thought he could work in Hollywood if it was known he was gay. She answered, "Well, why not? The director's gay, and so is his wife." Here, McKellen mentions, off the record, two very famous names. "The point is, if it is true, is that a lesbian. And a gay man. Got married. And not, of course, to fool their friends or themselves, but to fool the world. . . . I went right off Hollywood."

The actual process of coming out was, McKellen says, surprisingly painless. When he called his stepmother and sister to tell them he was gay, they informed him they'd known that for thirty years. The public mail he has since received has been almost entirely positive. And while he had been counseled that his career would be damaged, it has only grown since then. The first role he accepted, "quite deliberately" and with typically strategic finesse, was the part in the film *Scandal* of John Profumo, the government minister undone by a liaison with a call girl, and a man "whose only distinguishing characteristic was that he was a raving heterosexual."

When McKellen returned to California—to accept an AIDS-support-group award as Entertainment Industry Buddy of the Year—in September 1990, Maupin found a man "much easier with himself." The event itself is one Maupin, who attended with Anderson, says he will always remember. "This was a star-studded evening. Everybody in the world was in the room—Don Johnson and Melanie Griffith, Bette Midler, Madonna. . . . And Ian got up in front of every major closet case in Hollywood and told them to come out of the closet. . . that he had never felt this good. And that if anyone wanted help in coming out, that the three of us would be

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standing in the corner of the lobby after the event to give counsel. And there was a silence like you've never heard. He had said the unspeakable."

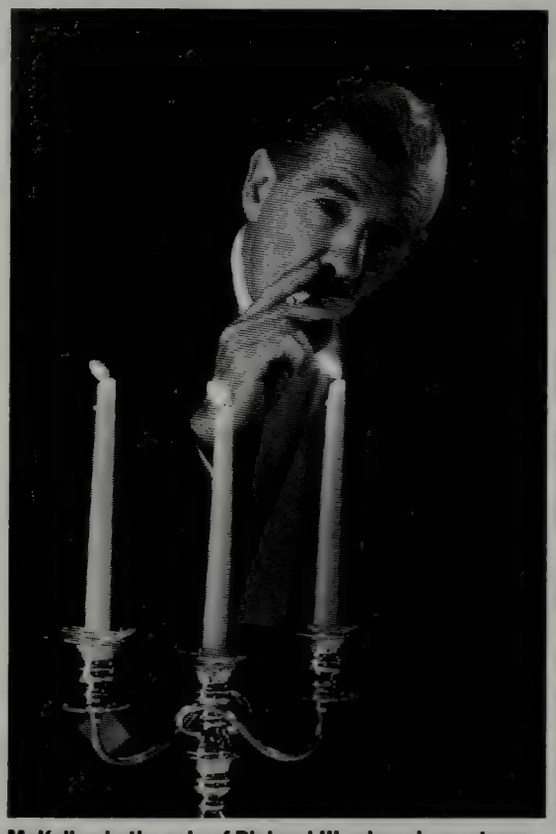
Three months later, he was awarded a knighthood. McKellen admits he was stunned by the ensuing controversy. "I thought it was going to be a reaction where people would say, 'How dare you give a knighthood to a poofter?' " He continues firmly, "I carry on as beforehand. I think I've got license to do whatever I want. That was what was basically wrong with Derek's argument. If you've got a knighthood, then you can do what you want; you don't start shutting up when you've got it."

Indeed, McKellen continues to rail loudly against heterosexual tyranny. "Who's telling us that we've got to stay where we are? Men, you know. Who can only define themselves in terms of their sexual prowess. And that's why they're frightened of gays. Because gays say, 'We are men, and we don't fuck women.' Take away that from some mogul tycoon's image of himself and what is he left with? In female-dominated societies, there are fewer problems with being gay.... It's Papa who worries. Uncle Sam ain't too sure of himself. And the same here, of course," he concludes, with a delighted, deep-voiced reference to Major's female predecessor. "Because Mrs. Thatcher is a man."

McKellen delivered this statement one afternoon in the garden café of the Lighthouse, the AIDS hospice he helped raise money to establish. Like all the places where I met him, it is linked exclusively to his public life. His house, in the Docklands section of London (financed largely by the money he made from *Amadeus*), and his private pursuits are strictly, he says, his own. And there is a distinction, he points out, "between saying you're gay and saying who you're sleeping with and how you sleep with them."

By most accounts, his private life has been rather austere. Sean Mathias notes that McKellen was always "too mean on himself.... When I met him, he was wearing old jumble-sale coats and driving a stupid old scooter, which I refused to get on. He didn't have a license to drive a motorcar. So I kind of encouraged him to take a motor test and earn some money and to buy some nice clothes. People say that I styled him."

Mathias sees further evidence of the puritan in his former lover. "He's uncomfortable if people talk about sex in public. Whereas I love to do the opposite.... But I don't know. He's the most extraordinarily private person. Very secretive. I'm sure I prized him open a lot as well.... I used to have to pin him down to talk about anything that was to do with an emotion or life, really, before. Now I think he is more open."



McKellen in the role of Richard III, whom he portrays as a thirties British fascist.

Ian told the star-studded Hollywood audience "to come out of the closet," says Armistead Maupin. "And there was a silence like you've never heard."

Other friends describe him as a bountifully generous man—someone given to taking friends going through hard times on holiday or writing long, supportive letters to them—and a person who loves company and parties. But Peter Eyre says, "Like a lot of gregarious people, he's very, very solitary. I think he's really quite shut away in himself."

When I first spent time with McKellen, some months ago, he admitted that the energy he had poured into his work as an actor and activist had left no place for "the unexpected." He would like, he said, to live with someone again "before I've forgotten how." He continued, sotto voce, "I can't expect the pleasures of relationships to come my way. They have to be earned. But I don't earn them at the moment."

When I mentioned this to Mathias, he answered, "I think he doesn't spend *enough* time alone. I think you can be with somebody in a relationship, or less solitary, only if you have spent a lot of time with yourself. And he spends so much time in the theater, and so much time attending to his activism, there can be very little time for reflection. So my advice would be: 'Well, hang out on your own a bit more, baby.' "

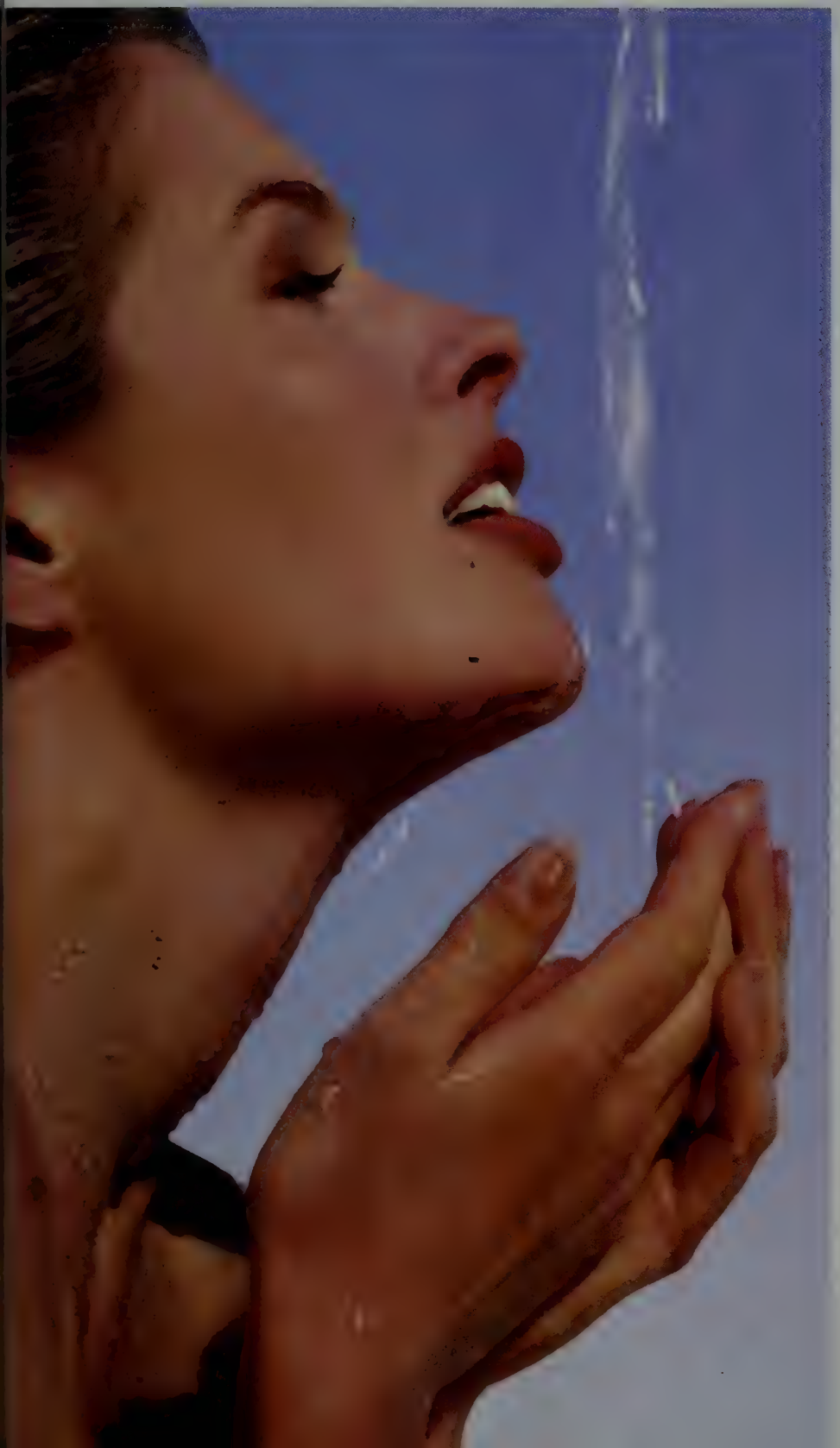
This, McKellen assured me—when I met him again this March—is exactly what he has been doing recently. Though he had arrived at the National harried and irritable—having missed lunch to do a BBC radio broadcast on gay issues and spent his morning writing an introduction to a book of interviews with people with AIDS—he claimed he had rearranged his schedule in order to have "quite enough time to myself, even to the extent occasionally of getting bored. And I love getting bored—it's a great challenge."

In fact, when he finishes the States tour of *Richard III* this fall, he intends to take at least a year and a half off from the theater, possibly to write a book—perhaps on Shakespeare, perhaps on coming out—and to see if, finally, he can find satisfying work in film. He says he is making room for "the serendipitous, the ball from left field. It's all much, much better."

Still, my most lingering memory of him comes from almost a year earlier. We had spent the entire day together, and as we sat down to a hasty, starchy dinner in the National cafeteria, he had finally begun to unwind a bit. His vast hands cradling his chin, he looked across the room at an old man sitting by himself by a window, over a steaming mug of tea. He was a caretaker, McKellen told me, who had been with the National for years. "He's my favorite man here," he crooned softly. "Isn't he gorgeous? Look at him—he's always alone." □

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Edna O'Brien: One of the last writers to make love affairs seem worth having.

THE PLAYGIRL OF THE WESTERN WORLD

Edna O'Brien strikes a mother lode of Dublin entendre in her new novel, *Time and Tide*

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

Edna O'Brien ought to have her own stamp, her own flag. She is a country unto herself, a republic of letters. To interview her is to pay a state visit. In her suite at the Wyndham Hotel, she sits docked before the window, outlined in light. If Ireland is a woman, as O'Brien wrote in *Mother Ireland*, no Irish woman is more Irish or woman than she. Her waist is cinched, her carriage Edwardian. Her breasts abound. "I could offer you some tea, some biscuits," she says in a voice that could quiet a crib. On a side table a display copy of her new novel, *Time and Tide* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), catches a ray of sun.

After our chat Norman Mailer will come fetch her for a guided tour of Brooklyn, where her parents experienced the American Dream in reverse. Instead of arriving poor and finding fortune, they arrived flush and returned with limp pockets. Born in Ireland, O'Brien was schooled in a convent. The Catholic Church scowled when she married a divorcé. Then she was damned for her debut novel, *The Country Girls* (1960), which the parish priest burned on the grounds of the church. Although O'Brien has lived in London since 1960, she bears the web marks of Ireland's sticky womb. "The psyche of Ireland is still saturated with religion and shame."

Priests aren't the only pills on the scene, however. The press is crawling with killjoys. "Oh, if only I was a guy, James. Saul Bellow said to me many years ago, 'You know something? You're Irish, you're good-looking and a woman, you're a writer. . . you're going to have a very hard time.' [Laughs] And he was right." In America, she is known simply as a writer. In England, she is considered a busy intersection. Her love affairs are legend. She has been accused of flaunting herself, the brazen hussy. How dare she appear on the cover of her anthology *Some Irish Loving* looking as brassy as a bird in a gilded cage? Years ago *Private Eye* parodied her hubba-hubba image with a fake promo for a show called *Edna*, bearing the legend "She came to London and drowned in a sea of men." She sees this headlong, headstrong plunge into worldliness as a protracted process of shucking the shame of her uptight upbringing. "I ain't a modern nun and I'm doing my best to educate myself."

Bless her billowing heart, she doesn't squirrel away her experiences. In the spirit of Colette, she shares everything she learns. She brings us the latest pickings. Except for a bout of unrequited love which left her blocked, O'Brien has barely been able to keep up with herself

DAVID BARRY



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over the years, producing novels, short stories, travel books, literary biography, filmscripts, plays. That's why her books never seem like formal invitations—they have the fast intimacy of breaking news. She is one of the last writers to make love affairs seem worth having. Yet O'Brien is no showboat in writer's drag, merely providing costume changes for a flamboyant ego. You never feel she's *personally* out to impress. There isn't the desperate reach for acceptance that you see in professional confessional sob sisters like Erica Jong or Harold Brodkey. Her best work has the witness-bearing power of true literature.

The uninitiated ought first to tuck into her trilogy, *The Country Girls*, *The Lonely Girl*, and *Girls in Their Married Bliss*, a funny, unforced succession of fallen-soufflé encounters. (Following a fumbled seduction, Baba in *Married Bliss* reflects, "An Irishman; good at battles, sieges and massacres. Bad in bed.") A more concentrated performance, *A Pagan Place* is a persistent throb of memory, so stark it seems written by an eye on a stick. *Night*, another memory piece, covers the full cycle of creation with a monologue spun in bed, the sheets warmed by Molly Bloom. Her screenplay for *X, Y & Zee* enabled Elizabeth Taylor to come barreling out of the chute. Her play *Virginia* afforded Kate Nelligan one of her greatest stage roles, although O'Brien now thinks she should have made Virginia Woolf a bit less alabaster. And then there are the stories, which are less awash in sensibility, told with more breath control. They view the Irish mist through a clear pane. It would be foolish to rattle off a list, but of the stories in her major collection, *A Fanatic Heart*, I would single out "Sister Imelda" as a perfect teardrop. O'Brien's most recent collection, *Lantern Slides*, was awarded the 1990 *Los Angeles Times* fiction prize.

And yet for all the bravas O'Brien has earned, she has been accused of planting both feet on the organ pedals. Of succumbing to the Irish gift of gab. The lyricism, clear as rain in her best writing, can become too subjective, distraught, leaf-clogged. "Oh life's crucible, oh strange latitudes, oh golden birds, heady drinks, poisons, elixirs, let me partake of you yet again"—that sort of thing. O'Brien recalls a conversation she had years ago with Norman Mailer, who offered to put her straight. "You're a good writer," said Mailer, "but you know what's wrong with you?"

"I said, 'Oh, great. Tell me.'

"He said, 'You're too interior.'

"I said, 'Norman, I'll strike a bargain with you: You're exterior and I'm interior. Why don't we, uh, combine it?' "

With some naysayers, no bargain can be reached. Once, at the Edinburgh Festival, a man trembling with indignation stood and cursed her hide for daring to invoke the names of Chekhov and Woolf. "You are a Mills & Boon author," he said, i.e., just another bodice ripper. O'Brien drew herself ten feet tall. "I have never done this, but I have to tell you...you are not welcome here. You haven't been listening to what I've said, so I'm asking you to leave." I'm not going, he huffed. "I said, 'I bet there's enough people in this hall that'll make sure you go, but actually I have now *willed* you to walk out that door.' " Out he went. But in his own crackpot way, her heckler echoed the opinion of some critics that O'Brien's fiction is highfalutin tosh—Brontë-sisters Sturm und Drang without the iron supplements.

During an LSD trip with R. D. Laing, O'Brien freaked, thinking she was stitched to the ceiling with daggers.

Politically minded younger career women have especially become wary of her writing. "I am not the darling of the feminists," O'Brien told *The Paris Review*. "They think I am too preoccupied with old-fashioned themes like love and longing." Love and longing by their very nature mean letting down your hair and running the risk of looking foolish. If Edna O'Brien embarrasses some readers, it's because embarrassment is her subject. As Pauline Kael wrote in a review of *X, Y & Zee*, "Love knows no honor; people in love do things that they never thought they'd do and that they've always despised other people for doing. They violate not only their own scruples but their own *style*." Younger women spurn such lack of control. Some of them are so in control they're about to crack. Frustrated, they attach their anger to outside forces. Be it Susan Faludi's backlash or Naomi Wolf's beauty myth, it is society which is to blame for their bad mood. I don't think they're owning up to what's really eating them, I tell O'Brien. I think it's something personal.

"Women have unconsciously surrendered a lot of their softer and more wise selves," says O'Brien. "We're all children as well as being mothers and fathers, and lovers, and fuckers, and non-fuckers—we're children in that awful bag of flesh that is us." She describes sitting at the hairdresser's in New York, hearing these women sound so hard and high-prioritized. "The sense of me, me, me, the looking at the watch, 'I'm in a hurry, I have a meeting'...the total lack of grace is absolutely frightening.... When I look at these women I've seen here, and see the overtness and the self-ishness...I don't think it's men they're looking for, I think it's their *mothers*." They're seeking and not finding a soft place of rest.

Motherhood is the big ball of wax in *Time and Tide*, which she wanted to call *Wilderness*. It's the story of a woman named Nell who wears misfortune on her brow. Her husband is a toad. One of her sons plunges into the Thames. But her defining relation is with her mother. "It's first of all my own journey with my own mother, which was paramount and terrible in many ways," says O'Brien. (Her mother considered *The Country Girls* odious.) In the novel, Nell writes a letter to her mother in which she remembers her first menses. "I believed the blood was flowing, flowing wildly and weirdly out of me, and that if I moved the flow would lead to death, my own death and a memory, oh yes, a memory-death of something long before that had to do with your blood, to do with you and me. It came to me then that you did not have the heart to bear me..."

Like Nell, O'Brien has two sons, "whom I happen to dote on, and by a curious law of chemistry, I think it's reciprocated." But being a mother is terrible too. "Because your children *kill* you—they kill you that day they cut you off," she says with a karate chop of the hand. In writing about mothers and sons, O'Brien didn't want to drone on Margaret Drabble–like (my example, not hers) about every domestic detail.


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THE MEN'S FRAGRANCE
FROM THE
HOUSE OF BALENCIAGA

"That isn't what interests me. It's the blood, samples of blood from one last drop of it." The phrase "samples of blood" comes from a line by the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam, which prefaces the novel. I quote from the transcript of our interview.

Her: "Pour your eternal dreams, in samples of blood from one glass to another." It's so powerful.
Me: Mmm.
Her: It's so mysterious, it's so powerful.
Me: Yeah.
Her: Oooh, I love it.
Me: Yeah.
Her: I mean, they scarify you.
Me: Yeah.
Her: They hurt you.
Me: Mmm.
Her: I believe literature should kind of hurt you, it should make you shake.

Time and Tide has its own case of the shakes. It contains a fictionalized account of an LSD trip O'Brien took with the radical psychoanalytical theorist R. D. Laing in those hazy, crazy sixties. Of Laing, she says, laughing, "I have a faculty for being drawn towards, shall we call it, people who may not be the best for me." Certainly the surly Scot was not a capable copilot. "[He] couldn't bring me back, nor did he, nor did he make much effort; he sort of left me in the middle of the trip." She freaked, thinking she was stitched to the ceiling with daggers. (*Bring me back,* cries Nell in the novel, halfway to hell.)

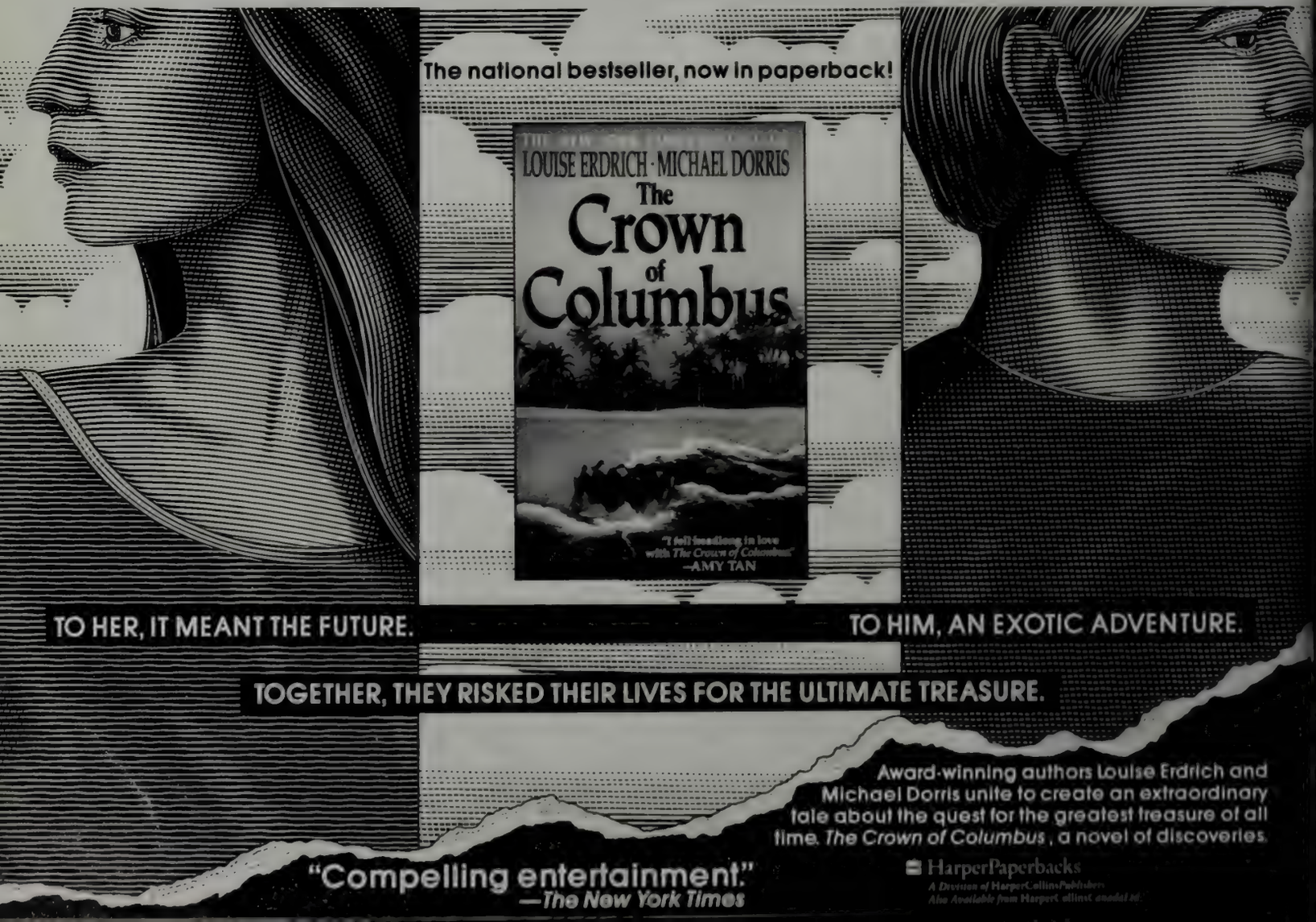
For all its warped mirrors, this acid flashback is a metaphor for the inner voyage O'Brien prizes in literature. "All I want from fiction is a trip. And if I don't get that trip, I don't care whether it's [from] a man or a woman, I have no time for it. I don't want to read a work that tells me a little about the world around me today. I know about the world around me. The standard of newspapers and journalism is far higher than the standard of most published fiction. So, what's left to write about? I think feeling and emotion and all those things which are put very high on a back shelf are essential for mankind."

"I believe literature should kind of hurt you, it should make you shake."

Her next novel will be called *House of Splendid Isolation*. She has also written a play about Yeats's muse Maud Gonne, which will premiere at Dublin's Abbey Theatre. "That's where it belongs, even though the Irish, whew, they can be hard on their own."

Americans have always been kinder. To promote *Time and Tide,* she will schlepp to a dozen cities. "Shall I tell you one of my big worries? You're going to love it. It's my hair. Who's going to do my hair in Pittsburgh? Who's going to do my hair in Minneapolis?" I quote her words of wisdom from an Athens, Georgia, band: "Man toils from sun to sun / A woman's hair is never done." "That'll be my mantra," she says.

As I depart, Edna O'Brien rushes to find a pair of sensible shoes for her tour of Brooklyn. And I recall something she chirped earlier in the afternoon. "I think it's a great time for Irish women in this town. Let's get a lot of Irish women in here." And soon! Before all our cold hearts turn to stone! □



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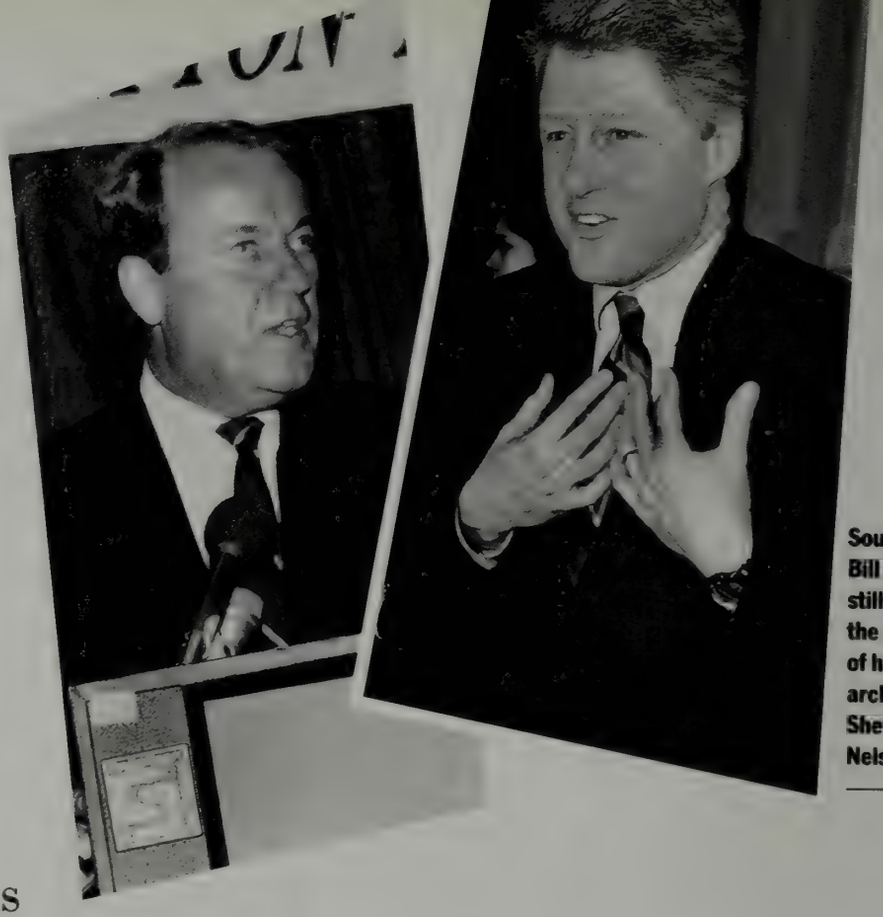


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THE SECRET WAR FOR THE WHITE HOUSE



Southern gothic: Bill Clinton is still fighting off the covert attacks of his Arkansas arch-enemy, Sheffield Nelson (*far left*).

While Bill Clinton toughs out one of the bloodiest campaigns in recent history, the Republican machine is gearing up for the real battle

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

"The politics of personal destruction," as Bill Clinton calls them, have so far overwhelmed the 1992 edition of the making of the president. Clinton's inevitable nomination as the Democratic presidential candidate will hardly signal an armistice in the covert war raging over the "character" issue. Rather, it will launch a new, even more intense offensive. In the general election, the process of ripping and tearing will only get fiercer, the clandestine struggles of political agents and the media bloodier. "The Republicans," despairs a senior Clinton adviser, "will do all they can to keep the rumor machine running."

As Clinton tries to suture his wounds, George Bush is sharpening the long knives. Ominous anticipation of Bush's negative campaign against Clinton is now the central tension in the presidential race. The question of what Bush may have on Clinton in the way of "political pornography," as one prominent Republican puts it, has almost become a national obsession. "The Bush campaign is resolved that character assassination on Clinton will work as well as it did on Michael Dukakis," says an influential Republican consultant close to the re-election effort. "They have no uplifting or forward-looking plan to sell George Bush. Of course, they would deny that right now." Another Republican operative involved in the Bush campaign promises that by Election Day "there won't be anything left of Clinton."

The lurid rumor mills of old Hollywood were a quaint cottage industry compared with those of the postmodern campaign. Hit squads, spy networks, and counterintelligence units fight a daily underground battle, only the haziest outlines of which are reported on the evening news and the front pages. "It's a war fought on several fronts," says George Stephanopoulos, Clinton's deputy campaign manager. What he describes is the law of the jungle: a struggle to the death of one against all. "It's a war against rumors, a war against tabloids, a war against Republicans, a war against other Democrats, opponents and otherwise. They've figured out that as long as you can keep a rumor in play it doesn't matter if it's true, because the fact of the rumor creates a dynamic which makes people more willing to investigate and more willing to print stories that wouldn't otherwise be news. It's not enough to dispute the rumor—you have to *disprove* it. The burden of proof is shifted to us, even though the accusers have zero credibility. We're guilty by suspicion, guilty until proven innocent."

In 1992, the character of politics has reached a watershed. The secret war has become more important in creating the image of a candidate than substantive reportage, than debates on the issues, or even than television ads—all of which have been reduced to playing off the subterranean battle.

The Republican Party has been planning for the imminent clash for a long time. More than a decade ago, the secretive opposition-research team at the Republican National Committee began tracking Bill Clinton. The millisecond he appeared as a blip on its national radar screen as a thirty-two-year-old candidate for governor in obscure Arkansas, the process of accumulating potentially damaging material began. ("And if you have anything on Clinton when he ran for Congress [in 1974]," says an R.N.C. official, "I'd love to talk to you.") Currently, about 350 Democratic politicians are the subjects of the far-flung Republican intelligence operation, which is unmatched by the haphazard Democrats. Any Democrat who runs for governor or Congress can be assured that he or she has a thick file at the R.N.C. that cannot

PHOTOGRAPHS: LEFT, BY ANGIE MOTE HOWARD; RIGHT, BY BOB DAEMMRICH

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be opened by invoking the Freedom of Information Act. And any Democrats whose contemplation of ever running for president is known outside their immediate family should operate on the assumption that every public utterance and every private act that operatives can trace will be used against them.

On the second floor of the brick warren of the R.N.C.'s offices, a few leafy blocks from the Capitol, the atmosphere in the opposition-research unit is something like that of the quiet, almost archival information-gathering to be found just across the Potomac, in Langley, Virginia, at C.I.A. headquarters. The department that the late R.N.C. chairman and negative-campaign expert Lee Atwater referred to as "the basement" is known to those who work there as Oppo. At the height of general-election campaigns, the staff balloons to more than forty diggers who glean information from more than 1,400 sources.

Each region of the country is surveilled by a division leader, a deputy, and a team of underlings. Almost every newspaper, from the smallest provincial weeklies to the metropolitan dailies, is clipped; the stories are catalogued, and every signifying word is coded into a special software program so that it can be recalled at the tap of a keyboard. Who knows what long-forgotten detail from someone's past, if detonated at the right moment, might destroy his career? (Clinton on "race," Clinton on "environment," Clinton on "Miss Arkansas.") Everywhere the subject has ever traveled and everyone he has met are accounted for. Everyone who has ever worked on the staff of or even contributed to the campaign of the subject is recorded and scrutinized. Any imbroglio involving these ancillary figures might eventually be deployed. "You pick your most potent thing," explains a Republican consultant who formerly helped direct the operations. And if there is nothing "potent" on the candidate, "there may be some things on the staff."

In the meantime, the political division maintains contact with local Republican leaders and others—including former police detectives and F.B.I. agents—who can exhume political skeletons. The information collected is not allowed to yellow and crumble, or get lost in a cabinet. "It would fill walls in hard copy," says the G.O.P. source. Rather, the files, known as "the Archive," are stored in a constantly humming computer—a mainframe is required for the voluminous task. "This never stops," says an R.N.C. operative. "It is never-ending."

It was this R.N.C. ministry and an Oppo group at the Reagan-Bush campaign that helped feed the stream of stories that almost drowned Geraldine Ferraro immediately after she was nominated for vice president in 1984. And it was thanks to this network that the embattled Lee Atwater, George Bush's campaign manager in 1988, was able to excavate the Willie Horton and Pledge of Allegiance issues that buried Michael Dukakis.

In April, the anticipation of the coming anti-Clinton offensive prompted the president to issue a strict edict to his campaign staff "to stay out of the sleaze business." Anyone who disobeys, he said, will be summarily fired. Part of the reason, one Republican operative suggests, may be that Bush himself is wary of the issue that his son George junior referred to as "the big 'A' " in 1987, pre-emptively raising it in *Newsweek* after the Gary Hart affair in order to dismiss it. "But even if nothing else comes out about Clinton between now and the election, it doesn't matter," says a Republican consultant involved in Bush's campaign. "The point has been made. They don't need another specific action. They just need a message to surface in people's minds."

"The Bush campaign is resolved that character assassination on Clinton will work as well as it did on Michael Dukakis."

And the Republicans are well aware that much of the dirty business of surfacing that precise "message" during the campaign will be undertaken, without any direct link to the White House, by independent-expenditure committees and other free agents aligned with the G.O.P., such as the National Rifle Association. The dive-bombing Americans for Bush committee, which launched the Willie Horton television spots last political season, has reorganized itself as the Presidential Victory Committee for this year's election. "We will spend $10 million in this cycle in support of President Bush," pledges Floyd Brown, the committee's chairman. "I'm not going to say what we're going to do in our advertising, but I would just say that the whole race is going to turn on *character*. I don't think just Gennifer Flowers is the deathblow. To be honest, we haven't finished our research. I think the skeletons have just started to fall out of Clinton's closet."

"I feel like I'm trapped inside a David Lynch movie," gasped one of Bill Clinton's senior aides about the Little Rock horror show in which he suddenly found himself hyperventilating. The *Star*'s story about Gennifer Flowers had just been published. That week, in the middle of the night, the phone rang in the apartment of David Wilhelm, Clinton's campaign manager. The caller ticked off names of women, presumably women with whom Clinton had had affairs. "You're through, Wilhelm, you're through." Click. At three in the morning, one of Clinton's press aides was awakened by another anonymous caller: "Your heart is going to be torn out. You're going to be dead." Click.

Downtown, Dr. Taibi Kahler opened his office to discover that it had been broken into during the night. The files under the letter *C* had been rifled. Kahler, a speech analyst who has worked with NASA astronauts, is a Clinton friend who for years has advised him on his public speaking. Kahler, however, keeps his Clinton file stashed elsewhere. "There wasn't anything embarrassing to Bill anyway," he says. The burglars left behind a cryptic note that alluded to "Nashville," where Clinton consults with an allergist. "The note," says Kahler, "was a clear reference to Bill."

Tabloid reporters decamped to Little Rock, calling every woman even remotely bruited to have had an affair with the governor, offering large sums of money if they would talk. It was well known that Flowers had received more than $100,000 from the *Star*. "Copycat bimbos," as the campaign staff called them, rang the Clinton headquarters and the governor's mansion, threatening to "tell all" if Bill would not come to the phone. One of the women propositioned by a tabloid with a Flowers-size fee, uncertain about what she should do, contacted Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, the Arkansan producer of *Designing Women* and *Evening Shade*. "I have a profile as someone extremely concerned with women's issues," explains Bloodworth-



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Thomason. "I was very distressed that the women of Arkansas were being used as pawns in this unsavory political game. The woman told me she never had an affair with Bill Clinton, never had a one-night stand with Bill Clinton, nothing with Bill Clinton. She also knew of two other women being contacted who never had affairs with Bill Clinton but were thinking about taking the money. I think she was tempted because of the amount of money involved. She said they told her, 'Just say anything.' " In the end, the woman rejected the offer.

Even before the Flowers story, however, the Clinton campaign had been strafed by rumor. *Penthouse* published a story by a rock groupie, Connie Hamzy, a.k.a. "Sweet Connie," who claimed to have been seduced by Clinton (in addition to her sexual volunteer work with innumerable rockers). By the time the campaign had located three eyewitnesses who were with Clinton when Sweet Connie claimed she had met him, and who refuted her story, CNN had already broadcast her account. (The network never bothered to correct its report.)

A Clinton press aide was awakened by an anonymous caller: "Your heart is going to be torn out. You're going to be dead." Click.

Two months later, amid the frenzied New Hampshire primary, Clinton's senior advisers were consumed by another scandal. The Nashua *Telegraph* told the campaign, according to Stephanopoulos, "We've received a tip on a story very, very damaging to Governor Clinton. We can't tell you what it is, can't tell you who's saying it, but we're going with it tonight. We want you available for a response." The Clinton aides spent six precious hours, just days before the vote, waiting at the newspaper's offices. Finally, at eight that evening, the scoop was revealed: it turned out that a disgruntled temporary driver for the Clinton staff had misunderstood a conversation about a campaign worker's salary in Washington, imagining the discussion was really about hush money for Gennifer Flowers.

Clinton, caught in this wind tunnel, was lacerated by the twisted shards of his personal history before he could establish any protective political depth. Once the early line settled in, it proved impossible to erase. His attempts to rebut the stories never caught up with the initial impression. And his occasionally facile explanations, sometimes fudging details, only reinforced the notion that he is fundamentally evasive and dishonest. The pejorative tag of "Slick Willie" was sticking partly because he was so unslick in his own defense.

Of course, it is a legitimate function of the press to investigate politicians. And some of the critical stories about Clinton—his cozy relations with certain Arkansas business interests, his environmental impact, his sometimes evasive rationalizations—have been essential in making an overall assessment of him. They are not simply "rehashed" stories already done by the Arkansas press, as Clinton has charged, but more comprehensive and focused; reporters from the outside, moreover, bring a fresh perspective. But as the drip of journalistic acid on Clinton's reputation continued, almost every major story about him and his background was entirely recast in the scandalous mode as an illustration of his flawed character.

A true chronicle of the 1992 campaign, then, must include an anatomical description of the circulatory system of rumormongering. Near the heart of the system are the political consultants. The rumors during the early primary season, from Flowers to the draft, were mostly "driven by a lot of people in the Democratic Party and the media," observes a prominent Republican. "The ones pushing it are the same losers involved in the same crash-and-burn operations for the last fifteen years and aren't part of the Clinton campaign. If they can't be in the photograph, they want to destroy the candidate."

One pollster for Senator Bob Kerrey who was anonymously faxing scurrilous material about Clinton to CBS was dismissed by the startled candidate when the aide's act was exposed. Kerrey even labeled him a "hit man." But he was hardly alone. Another of those spreading early, wild rumors was a Democratic consultant angry at Clinton because he was not hired for the campaign.

The consultants who want to spin a story out of control need reporters to do their work. The relationship is mutually dependent. For the national press in Washington, the truly personal relationships are no longer with the politicians; that would cross the line of objectivity. Rather, the binding ties are to the corps of consultants—the permanent sources.

Furthermore, reporters do not actually have to print or broadcast what they hear to have an impact. Journalists who are professionally proud to bear the trophies of inside dopesterism have only to hoist them in hotel bars. Here is a partial list of the unsupported rumors that have been brandished in recent months: Bill Clinton propositioned the young daughter of Ron Brown, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee. Bill Clinton has an illegitimate child, and a black anchorwoman in New England is the mother. Bill Clinton has regularly snorted cocaine in the governor's office, and the *Los Angeles Times* is publishing the story on Thursday. (This rumor prompted Betsey Wright, Clinton's former chief of staff, who was being interviewed by the L.A. *Times* on another story, to volunteer a denial about cocaine, which the newspaper published—a story about a nonstory catalyzed by a rumor.) Bill Clinton had an affair with Elizabeth Ward, the 1982 Miss America from Arkansas, and *Playboy* is doing a big spread. (In the magazine, she replied, "I don't believe that's anyone's business," when asked if she'd had an affair with Clinton. Then she held a press conference to deny that she ever had.) Bill Clinton once beat up a political opponent. Bill Clinton once beat up his former law partner and close friend, Bruce Lindsey. Bill Clinton beat up his former pollster. Bill Clinton fondled a young woman he cornered in an elevator. Hillary Clinton has had a number of affairs. Hillary is gay. And so on.

"This is a very small, incestuous community," says David Lauter, who is covering the campaign for the *Los Angeles Times*. "Sometimes rumors get spread because reporters want to sound knowledgeable and up on the latest inside thing. People have convinced themselves that there must be something out there. Having done that, they've convinced themselves that there must be stories about it. Anytime they hear that a newspaper has an extra reporter in Little Rock they start attaching these ghost stories to that reporter."

Before the Colorado debate, a group of journalists gathered to "trade rumors back and forth about stories that we were



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supposedly about to do," recalls one political reporter. For a half-hour the discussion centered on an electrifying *Los Angeles Times* story involving Clinton and drugs that "would end his campaign the next day." Suddenly, a reporter from the L.A. *Times*, Ron Brownstein, appeared and was pounced upon. The reporters excitedly demanded the details of the exposé. There were none. "It was constant for at least ten days, someone pulling me aside, asking me when it was coming out," says Brownstein.

"It's this year's parlor game in Washington: What do you know about Bill Clinton that will do him in?" says a well-connected Republican who has played key roles in the last two presidential campaigns. Another veteran Republican strategist attended the mid-March banquet in Washington for the Nixon Library and found himself engulfed. "There was a very important editor regaling my entire table with the story that his paper had uncovered that Bill Clinton had an illegitimate black child. It was cocktail chatter. It's unprovable. Another woman, the wife of a news executive, said she heard that *Playboy* would run a spread next month of eight women—'The Women of Bill Clinton.' It's hard to sort them all out, the things I've heard."

"Don't worry," a big moneyman for Kerrey confidently assured his colleagues in late February. "Clinton will be knocked out of the race in a week by a drug story, and then Kerrey will win." One reporter, jaded by the ceaseless whispers, reflects, "If we had a buck for every time we've heard Clinton's dead, we could quit this gig." But these stories are the new currency of insider trading. In the political world, unlike the financial, the profit comes not from how closely one can hold the inside dope but how widely one can spread it. By the time the campaign reached New York for its early-April primary, the hip, knowing types were retailing rumors that had been traded months ago in Washington: "You mean Clinton doesn't have an illegitimate black baby?" went one conversation among local journalists at the downtown Café Loup. "Why, I heard it yesterday from Jim"—a well-plugged-in writer whose reputation for knowing lent the story credence.

The charged atmosphere has even set off uncontrollable chain reactions: Gennifer Flowers' story eventually begets Hillary Clinton's speculation in *Vanity Fair* about Bush's alleged mistress; the media's chasing after Bill Clinton begets ABC News's tale of Jerry Brown's supposed tolerance of drug use, featuring anonymous, shadowed sources. Politics has become a perpetual-motion machine of scandal.

How did all of this start? The genealogy of the Clinton "scandals" can be traced through his political rise in Arkansas and his rivalry with a figure who has emerged as his most embittered, indefatigable foe. Over the last two decades, Clinton became the central character in a tangled southern-gothic political play. He believed that in taking his long step into presidential politics he was leaving behind the parochial battles of his past, but he soon found that the cords were coiled tighter around him than ever.

"We've received a tip on a story very, very damaging to Governor Clinton. We can't tell you what it is...but we're going with it tonight."

In the political mythology of Arkansas, Clinton is the golden boy, who at the age of sixteen shook hands with President Kennedy, and became infatuated with the romance of politics. On to Georgetown University, a Rhodes scholarship, and then to Yale Law School. He returned to Arkansas, determined to become governor and to raise one of the most backward states to modern levels. "Thank God for Mississippi" was the unofficial state slogan, expressing gratitude that there was at least one place that ranked lower. But in his very first campaign, his race for a House seat in 1974, he lost by four percentage points—in part because of a rumor that he was the man in a photograph of a bearded antiwar protester perched in a tree outside the University of Arkansas student union the same Saturday President Nixon was on the campus, attending an Arkansas-Texas game. (Clinton happened to be studying at Oxford at the time.)

Elected governor in 1978, he moved too swiftly with sweeping reforms and was narrowly defeated in 1980 by a man whose greatest cause turned out to be creationism. Clinton came back in 1982 as a chastened, far more canny pol, cutting clever deals with the legislature. Some to his left complained that he overcompromised, but many of their criticisms were a reflection of the expectations he had built. Slowly, Clinton was dragging "the land of opportunity" (the real state slogan) out of its retrograde condition, incrementally improving almost every social index. But his convoluted efforts at perestroika turned the state's politics into a complex, dangerous game, with himself as its total focus. "Clinton is an enigma," says Mike Gauldin, his press secretary. "We want somebody who carries the banner for us, who shows the world Arkansas is O.K., but we resent the guy who can do that. There isn't any politician in Arkansas history who is so intensely loved and hated."

There is one man in Little Rock who hates him most of all, the governor's sworn enemy, who has somehow remained a virtual secret outside Arkansas. He is Sheffield Nelson, a wealthy former gas executive, once an ardent Clinton supporter, and now the co-chairman of the state Republican Party and the chief bone-rattler of Bill Clinton's skeletons. In his obsessive pursuit of Clinton, Nelson resembles police inspector Javert in *Les Misérables*, whose sole purpose in life is to hunt down his prey. One prominent Arkansas journalist refers to Nelson simply as "Hannibal Lecter." "If I were doing a movie," remarks Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, "the quintessential bad guy is Sheffield Nelson. He's got everything but the twirling mustache and the lady tied to the railroad tracks."

The story of Clinton's antagonist is a classic tale of American success. Sheffield Nelson was a poor boy, son of an itinerant laborer, who, when he was the student-body president at the University of Central Arkansas, had the rare good fortune to impress Witt Stephens, confidant of governors and the patriarch of the most powerful family in the state. (Stephens, Inc., of Little Rock is one of the largest bond-trading houses off Wall Street, and the Stephens empire encompasses energy resources, real estate, and banking.) Mr. Witt, as he was deferentially called, adopted the youthful Nelson as a surrogate son and raised him up until he was made the head of the Stephens-controlled Arkla, Inc., the largest natural-gas company in the state.

In 1973, Stephens retired from Arkla, though he maintained control through a

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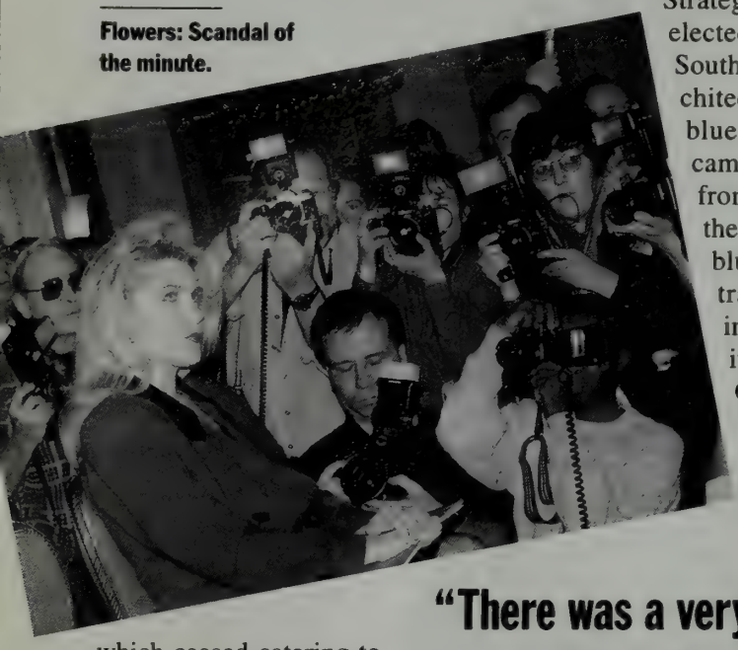


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loyal board of directors. When Nelson proposed several modernizing programs, however, the board fought back—apparently at the behest of Nelson's mentor. An intense three-year power struggle ensued. Nelson finally persuaded the board to back his more efficient policies, which ceased catering to other Stephens-owned businesses—alienating Mr. Witt and his family forever. Years later, at about the same time that Clinton was elected governor for the second time, Nelson cut a lucrative deal with one of his best friends, Jerral "Jerry" Jones, the head of the Arkoma Production Company (and now the owner of the Dallas Cowboys). The arrangement ended up locking Arkla into paying a higher-than-market rate to buy gas from Arkoma in exchange for a $45 million investment by Jones. Not incidentally, the deal slighted Stephens Production Company, the family-controlled firm, which held a less advantageous contract.



Flowers: Scandal of the minute.

"There was a very important editor regaling my entire table with the story that... Bill Clinton had an illegitimate black child."

In the mid-eighties, Nelson harbored ambitions to run for governor. He was a Democrat who had backed liberal presidential candidates: Ted Kennedy in 1980 and Walter Mondale in 1984. In anticipation of his own gubernatorial bid, Nelson held fund-raisers for the state party and ingratiated himself with Bill Clinton. The governor appointed him head of the Arkansas Industrial Development Commission, which Nelson used as a vehicle to travel around the state to make political contacts. Nelson sought favors large and small from Clinton, even asking that the governor nominate him for the Horatio Alger Award (which he did). But Clinton ran again in 1986 and, after some hesitation, announced for 1990. Nelson was profoundly frustrated.

Yet certain events within the Republican Party, in Washington and Little Rock, were about to propel him into the arena. At the core of the G.O.P.'s grand design to become the prevailing force into the twenty-first century lies a Southern Strategy. Under George Bush, elected president with a solid South, the ultimate political architect was his party chairman, blues guitarist and negative-campaign maestro Lee Atwater from South Carolina. One of the biggest obstacles to his blueprint was the most intractably Democratic state in the South, Arkansas, and its leading Democrat, Bill Clinton.

"We really felt we had a shot at Bill Clinton, but we didn't have a candidate," says one of Atwater's former deputies. In his R.N.C. office, Atwater greeted a Democratic congressman from Arkansas, Tommy Robinson, and made an alluring proposition: change parties, run for governor, and get full G.O.P. support. In 1978, when Robinson was still a small-town police chief, Clinton had appointed him director of the State Public Safety Department. Robinson was then elected Pulaski County (Little Rock) sheriff, and became what many describe as something out of *Smokey and the Bandit*—but more Jackie Gleason than Burt Reynolds. He arrested a county judge and a comptroller to protest what he thought was inadequate financing of his office; he got himself jailed for contempt of court; he handcuffed fourteen county-jail prisoners to a guard tower. In 1984, he was elected to the House.

Robinson had already conducted a private poll that showed he couldn't beat Clinton for governor in a Democratic primary. But if he ran as a Republican, Atwater "promised the whole boat," says the source. "Robinson would be his top priority. He would have complete R.N.C. and White House support." Moreover, Jackson Stephens, Mr. Witt's younger brother, had become a big backer of Bush, and would help Robinson. "I'll switch," replied Robinson, who was soon at the White House with the president of the United States blessing him for becoming a Republican. But that announcement triggered another one shortly thereafter: Sheffield Nelson, infuriated that the Stephens-backed Robinson might pre-empt him from attaining the capstone of his career, had *also* decided to switch parties and run for governor.

All sorts of pressures were applied against Robinson. According to a source close to Robinson, his boyhood friend Jerry Jones (yes, *that* Jerry Jones) told him to get out of the race or pay his personal debts to Jones, which came to about $1 million. (Jones did not respond to calls for this article.) To cover his financial strains, Robinson kited checks at the House bank, becoming the single largest transgressor there—996 overdrafts totaling $251,609. But what most plagued the Robinson campaign at the time was a series of "strange" occurrences, according to a source close to Robinson, that were eerily similar to those that would later haunt the Clinton campaign in the aftermath of the Flowers story. J. J. Vigenault, the former chairman of the Bush campaign in Arkansas, who had been assigned by Atwater to work for Robinson as part of the deal, was trailed everywhere he went by the same mysterious car. The campaign traced it to a private-detective agency. Other Robinson advisers were also followed. In the parking lot across from their headquarters, campaign workers spotted a man with a zoom lens snapping photographs. Some top Robinson aides received anonymous threatening phone calls in the middle of the night. "It was just so strange," says a source who received one. Robinson's handlers suspected that Nelson was behind it all. "I feel the guy would have done anything to beat us. If that was done to us," one says, "I don't doubt anything."

Nelson won the primary and turned his wrath on Clinton, who for the first time in his career was receiving substantial backing from the Stephens family. Against their arch-enemy, Nelson, "they had to support the man whose head they would have loved to deliver to Atwater," explains Skip Rutherford, the former chairman of the Arkansas Democratic Party. And Nelson had another



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reason to hate Clinton: at the governor's request, the state's Public Service Commission investigated the Arkla-Arkoma deal, ruling it "imprudent" and ordering Nelson's company to rebate more than $17 million to consumers who had been overcharged as a result.

Suddenly, the Clinton campaign found itself experiencing weird events: anonymous threatening phone calls in the middle of the night and campaign staffers feeling that they were being followed. Then, on October 19, 1990, in the heat of the race, a former college classmate of Nelson's, Larry Nichols, held a press conference. Nichols had been an employee of the Arkansas Development Finance Agency who had been fired two years earlier for making 142 long-distance telephone calls at state expense to leaders of the Nicaraguan contras. He now announced he was filing a lawsuit against Clinton, charging that he had been dismissed as part of a cover-up of a secret fund that the governor used to subsidize his dalliances. Nichols listed five women who he claimed had had affairs with Clinton, and whose depositions he said would prove his case. One of those mentioned was Gennifer Flowers, who responded by threatening to sue a local radio station after it broadcast her name.

(Rumors of Clinton's extramarital affairs had long been rife, and they sometimes took on a phantasmagoric quality. A street minstrel, Robert "Say" McIntosh, who called himself "the sweet-potato-pie king," and who was well known around Little Rock for his eccentric public displays, passed out hand-printed leaflets in front of the statehouse for years. "To my knowledge," reads one, "Gov. Clinton has had 40 black gals and 13 white gals. . . no wonder Arkansas is 49th and 50th in everything.")

After Nichols held his press conference, he sought advice from Robert Leslie, an Arkansas member of the R.N.C., about how to make the depositions of the women public. Yet Nichols never produced any depositions. During the primary he contacted Robinson's handlers, offering them his help. "I didn't want anything to do with him," says one of Robinson's senior advisers. "I thought he was a con man." Getting the brush-off from the Robinson campaign, Nichols "went to Sheffield," according to the Robinson aide. "I believe Sheffield funded the whole thing."

Nelson apparently was ready to turn the Nichols suit into a major issue to swing the campaign his way. He prepared a negative ad, with Nichols's story as its launching point, that accused Clinton of marital infidelity. The Arkansas newspapers refused, however, to publish a word about Nichols's lawsuit. Nelson, after much agonizing, scrapped his ad. Two days before the election, Nichols approached Clinton press secretary Mike Gauldin, offering to drop the suit if Clinton would give him $150,000 and a house. Clinton refused. On November 6, he won the election.

But Nelson was just beginning his pursuit. He got himself named co-chairman of the Arkansas G.O.P., and began retailing rumors he heard about Clinton. One reporter recalls telling Nelson a harmless fact about Clinton and then having Nelson retell it to him later, apparently forgetting its source, as the basis of a scandal he ought to investigate.

Over the last two decades, Bill Clinton became the central character in a tangled southern-gothic political play.

When Clinton was asked the adultery question in July 1991 by reporters and replied, "It's none of your business," Nelson hinted darkly to the *Arkansas Gazette*, "That works in Arkansas, but I guarantee you that, if you announce for president, it won't work."

When Clinton declared he was running for the Democratic nomination, Nelson feverishly tried to get reporters to write about the rumors of infidelity, for starters. Soon, according to a number of sources, Nelson's former press secretary, John Hudgens, helped put the *Star* in touch with Flowers, the failed chanteuse and hanger-on to local Republican pols, who had worked as a TV reporter for Hudgens when he was an assignment editor at KARK (Hudgens denies being the link). Finally, Flowers agreed to sell her story and heavily edited tapes of phone conversations with Clinton for at least $100,000.

Two days before Flowers held her press conference, broadcast on CNN, Nichols dropped his lawsuit—to little fanfare. Here is the essence of his barely noticed statement:

I want to tell everybody what I did to try to destroy Governor Clinton. . . . This has gone far enough. I never intended it to go this far. . . . It just kept getting bigger and bigger. . . . The media has made a circus out of this thing and now it's gone way too far. When that *Star* article first came out, several women called asking if I was willing to pay them to say they had an affair with Bill Clinton. This is crazy. One London newspaper is offering a half-million dollars for a story. . . . I have allowed the media to use me and my case to attack Clinton's personal life. There were rumors when I started this suit and I guess there will be rumors now that it is over. But it is over. I am dropping the suit. In trying to destroy Clinton, I was only hurting myself. If the American people understand why I did this, that I went for the jugular in my lawsuit, and that was wrong, then they'll see that there's not a whole lot of difference between me and what the reporters are doing today.

Thus began the "character" issue that has dominated the current campaign.

The next bombshell that shook Clinton, reinforcing doubts about his character, was the revelation of a 1969 letter he had written to Colonel Eugene Holmes, the R.O.T.C. officer at the University of Arkansas. The letter thanked Holmes for admitting the Rhodes scholar into the program, which exempted him from the draft. News stories depicted Clinton as a manipulative draft dodger. Overlooked was how the long-buried letter had made its way into the public record from a number of mysterious sources. One leaker was James M. Tully, a partner in Global Research International, Inc., the shadowy company founded by former attorney general John N. Mitchell which sold helicopters and military supplies to Saddam Hussein and contracted with Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. (Tully did not return phone calls for this article.)

The draft issue—which Clinton was unable to shake despite a *Time*-magazine column by Strobe Talbott, his former Oxford housemate, corroborating his account—resurfaced during the New York primary with the leak of a new letter. This one, written by Oxford friend Cliff Jackson, noted that Clinton had once received an induction notice. It was a bureaucratic snafu Clinton had been advised to ignore at the time, but it seemed to undermine his honesty yet again because he had neglected to mention it. Jackson, however, is not a disinterested party. The Little Rock attorney, a former research director for the Arkansas

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G.O.P., has organized an independent-expenditure committee called the Alliance for the Rebirth of an Independent American Spirit (ARIAS), which bought dozens of anti-Clinton newspaper and radio ads in New Hampshire. Jackson's efforts have complemented those of Clinton's arch-enemy.

Sheffield Nelson's large corner office is located on the thirty-fourth floor of the TCBY Building, the tallest in Little Rock, overlooking the twisting Arkansas River. His gray, businesslike mien is instantly dispelled by his rapid-fire twang. There is nothing muted or indirect about him.

"I know Clinton as well as anyone," he begins in a confidential tone. "His number-one drive is to be president. He's never been governor." The evil Stephens family, Nelson explains, feared his victory over Clinton in 1990. "The Stephenses knew I'd close down their playhouse." All their bond business with the state would have been cut off. "I'd have brought it all to a halt immediately. Their free ride would have stopped." That's why they decided to purchase Clinton "lock, stock, and barrel."

It was, Nelson continues, only a gentlemanly sense of restraint that kept him from raising the question of Clinton's private life. "I could have beat his head off with women." But, Nelson says, he was not responsible in any way for the rumors about Clinton. Though he has been to Washington a number of times before, during and after the Flowers affair, he denies conferring with any Republican political operatives. He admits, however, that during his campaign against Clinton he sent a young lawyer to interview a prisoner in a state jail who had once worked in the governor's mansion and claimed to have sex stories to tell. "Once he got there," confides Nelson, "he heard some things gentlemen don't talk about." Nelson says he didn't use the information because of the tainted source.

In response to the Robinson campaign's charges that Sheffield was behind the dirty tricks and strange incidents that plagued that campaign, Nelson snapped, "They're paranoid. Totally false. We didn't do very much. Tommy's good enough to shoot his own feet. He's got a motor-mouth that doesn't engage his brain."

As for Clinton, Nelson says contentedly, "He's being well toasted." And Nelson predicts that "there will be more personal issues coming out." His smile broadens. "Every day you'll see more and more.... I'm just saying what I hear."

"If Clinton can get rid of the 'character' issue," speculated a Republican strategist in April, "he's president of the United States, no question. But how does he get rid of it?" Then the Republican handler, who is close to Bush's reelection campaign, confided in exactly the same sotto voce tone in which he passes on rumors about Clinton, "You know, there's dirt in Bush's past, sleazy business deals."

Clinton understands that the "character" issue is not bogus, but he wonders whether his whole character will ever be presented. He sounds almost fatalistic as he leans back into the seat of his campaign charter airplane. "When you run for president, sooner or later, you have to confront all this.... You know, we live in an age in which you're supposed to pretend that you hate public life, that this is an awful burden you've decided to do. But I was raised in a time when it was an honorable thing to do and when it was seen as the best avenue for change."

The chief bone-rattler of Bill Clinton's skeletons, the governor's sworn enemy, has somehow remained a virtual secret outside Arkansas.

Some of his problems, Clinton says, are "rooted in the fact that I'm a complicated person." But, he adds, "a lot of it's being stirred because of the Arkansas enemies I have and the Republicans, because they know that's what sells, in spite of all the people who say, 'Well, we don't want another negative personal campaign.' "

Clinton shakes his head when he's asked about Sheffield Nelson. "I think when he was defeated he was a rich guy with a lot of time left in his life, a lot of energy, and he had one of two choices: one was to try to find something constructive to do and the other was to take all his venom out trying to bring me down. He's just so bitter.... It was all stripped away, everything he'd ever stood for for years; he'd abandoned that not only by changing parties but all of the philosophical changes. It was all gone, there was nothing left. And now he just wants somebody else to hurt, too."

Bitter political jealousy and scandal, of course, are nothing new to American politics. The seamy thread has run through presidential campaigns from the beginning of the Republic. Consider: Which president sent love letters to his neighbor's wife—*and* was rumored to be a woman in drag? (George Washington.) Which candidate was married to a bigamist? (Andrew Jackson.) Which supported an illegitimate child? (Grover Cleveland.) Which authorized a gay sting operation while serving as assistant secretary of the navy and then tried to cover up? (Franklin D. Roosevelt.) Which had an affair with an editor of the main newspaper promoting his candidacy? (Wendell Willkie, the *New York Herald Tribune*.) Which divorced his mentally unstable wife and carried on a number of affairs? (Adlai Stevenson.) And this is only a smattering of the lowlights.

But what has changed is the impact and legitimization of the rumor-mongering. Typically, the Willkie and Stevenson indiscretions were considered politically out of bounds by their opponents. The conditions under which this radical transformation has taken place are well known: disillusionment with politics; the collapse of the wall between the public and the private; the bastardization of investigative reporting; and the expansive web of post-industrial communications. The elements have now coalesced into a technopolitical structure that is easily manipulated by practiced operators.

All of this is bearing down on the 1992 campaign with accelerating ferocity. The enormous stakes in the presidential race—the future balance of power between the Republican and Democratic parties, the shape of the economy, and the country's role in the "new world order"—will be largely contingent upon whether the now institutionalized system of campaign by "scandal" will prevail as the dominant factor of American political life. Though the editors of the respectable media may deplore the trend, they not only seem incapable of reversing it but have been swept up by it themselves. There are no countervailing forces in sight—only increasingly naked motivations and exigencies. "Clinton needs to be more than defeated in 1992," says one Bush campaign adviser. "He must be *destroyed*, so we can beat him in 1996." □



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Hawking with his housemate and former nurse, Elaine Mason, in 1991.

HEART AND MIND

A rare glimpse at the private man behind the brilliant mind of Stephen Hawking, whose *A Brief History of Time* now comes to the screen

BY ARTHUR LUBOW

An ordinary Hollywood evening. In the metal-stone-and-glass rotunda of the Creative Artists Agency, the guests at the invitational screening bump in Brownian motion around what must be the world's largest potted ficus. The director, Errol Morris, a loose-limbed fellow with a What's-up-Doc gleam in his eye, and the executive producer, Gordon Freedman, look a little nervous. It's seven P.M., the film is scheduled to begin, and the star has not yet arrived. Then a whisper ripples through the lobby—*Stephen is here!* Morris bounds out the front door. At the street corner, a group of ten people, including some passersby, stand around a small, frail, slack-faced man slumped in a wheelchair.

The first glimpse of Stephen Hawking is always a shock. He's totally limp, a homunculus awaiting an animating spark. His face is as smooth and frozen as an Arctic lake, punctured only by the pale-blue pools of his expressive eyes and the recurring gash of his famous grin. With a couple of barely functional fingers on his left hand, coiled backward on an illuminated knob, he can control the movement of his battery-operated chair. Left speechless by a tracheostomy in 1985, he communicates through a computer that is mounted on his wheelchair and connected to a voice synthesizer. His right hand curls around a clicker that points at words which scroll down his computer screen. At his command, the synthesizer delivers the assembled sentences in a robotic dead pan that the very English physicist jokingly refers to as his "American accent." The voice does sound vaguely American, but mainly synthetic—somewhat reminiscent of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Terminator.

History will determine Hawking's importance in theoretical physics, but the verdict is already in on his book, *A Brief History of Time*. Appearing in 1988, it enjoyed two years on the *New York Times* best-seller list, selling a million hardcover copies, before going into a trade-paperback edition that has so far sold more than 700,000. There is no paperback in Britain, and no need for one. The hardcover has hovered at or near the top of the *Sunday Times* list for more than three years; this summer it will overtake *The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady* to become the longest-lasting best-seller in the British list's history. Translated into thirty-seven languages, the book has sold 5.5 million copies worldwide.

Under two hundred pages long but notoriously impenetrable, *A Brief History of Time* is not simply a book. It's a fetish, an accessory, an artifact. Its mega-success demands meta-literary explanations. "Who he is is as important as what he says," suggests Peter Guzzardi, who edited the book at Bantam. "There is a triumph of the human will that we can celebrate." To Chicago physicist David Schramm, the reason for the book's popularity is obvious: "Clearly the book sold not because people understood it, but because he's a cult figure, one of the icons of the latter part of the twentieth century." The public imagination is captivated by the notion of a man at the outer fringe of human experience, in pursuit of the mysteries at the far-

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thest limit of human knowledge. Or in the words of Errol Morris, whose clever and engaging documentary movie, also called *A Brief History of Time*, opens in U.S. theaters this summer, "It wasn't reading the book itself that made me want to make the film. What made me want to make the movie was meeting Stephen Hawking."

The mythmaking media machine has manufactured a Hawking icon of crippled genius that can be placed alongside the ear-bandaged van Gogh or the stone-deaf Beethoven. Peering out grimly against a starry backdrop from his book's cover (a pity-provoking picture he loathes), Hawking is the model of pure mind unleashed from body. Paradoxically deifying and patronizing, this incorporeal view is held only by those who don't know Hawking personally. "He's a real person," says Schramm. "He's got joys and sorrows and emotions. He's not a machine."

If the point needed making, Hawking did so dramatically in January 1990, just as Morris began filming *A Brief History of Time* in London's Elstree Studios. After nearly twenty-five years of marriage, Stephen, who is now fifty, left his wife, Jane, and moved into a nearby flat in Cambridge with Elaine Mason, one of his nurses. His exit, which shocked Jane and titillated the British tabloids, also dismayed the filmmakers. The marital crisis created unanticipated problems. Neither Jane nor the Hawkings' three children would be interviewed for the documentary. Some friends of the family also bowed out. Elaine's husband, David Mason, the computer expert who adapted the console to rest on Hawking's wheelchair, had been hired as a consultant to the movie; he announced that he wouldn't come to the set when his wife was present.

These intrusions of messy personal affairs mirrored a deeper underlying problem for Morris: what was the connection between Hawking's life and work, and how could that link be presented in a movie? Hawking wanted the film, like his book, to focus on the science. "I told him the difference between the movie and the book is that I cannot imagine the movie without him in it," Morris recalls. But how much of Hawking would there be? The documentary provides, in Morris's words, "very little biography, but a biographical sketch" that suggests Hawking's persistence, discipline, and creativity following the onset of the progressive illness that crippled him: amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, known in America as Lou Gehrig's disease, in Britain as motor-neuron disease. The movie doesn't dwell on his disability, because Hawking considers that maudlin. It doesn't examine his marriage, because Hawking regards that as prying. It doesn't question his theories, because self-questioning is not Hawking's style. "I had a responsibility to tell a story about Stephen Hawking that Stephen Hawking would like," Morris says.

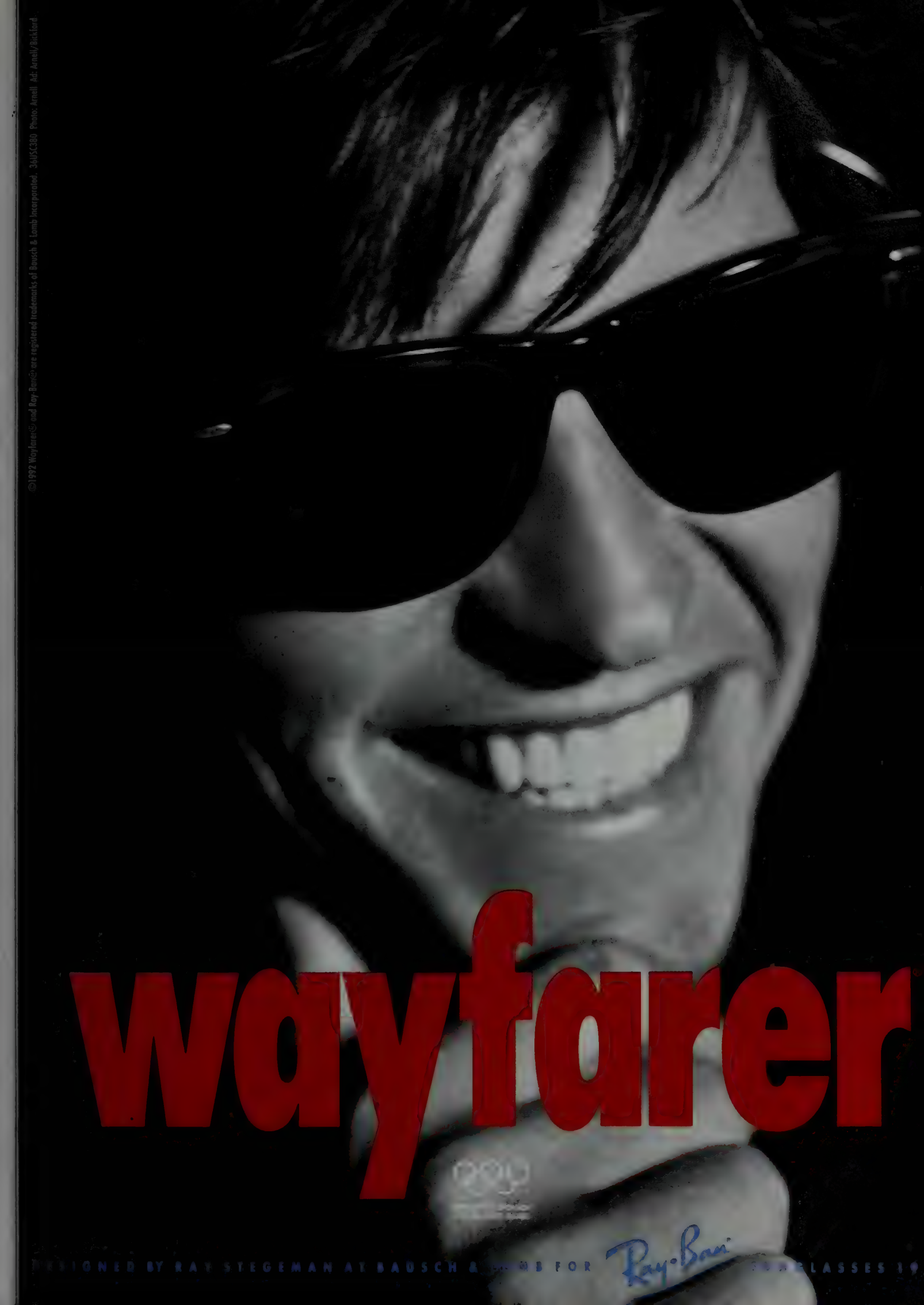
"Stephen dominates everyone in his presence," says director Errol Morris. "He is a very strong personality."

Hawking had seen work prints of the film on cassette, which he dissected with lengthy, detailed criticisms. He had flown to Boston for ten days to consult with Morris in the editing room. But the CAA screening was the first time that he had seen the movie in a theater with an audience. At the post-screening reception, while Elaine Mason—a tall, ebullient, big-boned woman with curly red hair—chatted in a circle that included her two young boys, Hawking's nurses, and a few friends, the physicist wheeled about the rotunda. He is a man who likes a party, and never more so than when he is the guest of honor. In a city that respects star power, he was obviously a star, and the CAA agents angled for introductions. "He's the Mick Jagger of theoretical physicists," quips Morris's wife, Julia Sheehan. That in the room of fifty people he was the only one sitting added to his air of majesty. He listened expressionlessly to producer Lynda Obst enthusiastically extol the movie as an introduction to his ideas for the many people who had struggled with the book. When she had finished, he began to work his clicker, his mouth straining with the physical effort. At last, the robotic voice spoke. "There's less science than I had hoped," Hawking said, "but maybe more than people can take."

Errol Morris's movie should pump another shot of adrenaline into Hawking's public reputation. Morris interviewed Hawking's friends, relatives, and professional colleagues, not in their homes or offices but in expensively manufactured sets that, ersatz but convincing, lend an air of hyperauthenticity to the movie. There are very few special effects in his *A Brief History of Time*, and most of them are not the zow!-bang! cartoons of colliding molecules that science-documentary fans are accustomed to. The movie's opening scene sets the tone. As Hawking's synthesized voice poses the question "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" the screen is filled with the image of a giant chicken against a night sky. The chicken was a feature of the movie that Hawking disliked, but Morris insisted on keeping it. He says, "I have a motto: Better a fetish than a symbol."

Morris, a MacArthur Fellow and the director of *The Thin Blue Line*, was brought into the picture on the recommendation of Steven Spielberg's company, Amblin Entertainment. Executive producer Freedman had gone to see Spielberg, who he knew was an admirer of Hawking's, in hopes of getting a tip on a director and the prestige of Amblin's name. Spielberg happily supplied both, but, disliking an early version of the movie, he has withdrawn Amblin's name from it. Certainly, *A Brief History of Time* is not what you would think of as a Spielberg picture. Austerely eschewing sentiment and hoopla, it is a meticulously photographed sequence of talking heads. That it fascinates the viewer is partly a credit to Morris's skill but largely a tribute to Hawking's magnetism.

Because he can't speak or move, Hawking was filmed, as he complained to producer David Hickman, "like a sofa." When the filmmakers built a circular track to run a camera around him, he teased that they were playing trains. Morris set up what he called "a dictionary of shots" of Hawking filmed from different angles. He also assembled a collection of Hawking's synthesized-voice statements. Any journalist who has received a celebrity's rote response to an often asked question will flinch at this cybernetic nightmare: Hawking literally serves up pre-cooked answers by accessing them from his computer memory. But even though Hawking is used (in Morris's phrase) as "the first non-talking talking head," the man's personal force comes through. "The thing you become most aware of in meeting Stephen Hawking is how completely in control he is," Morris says. "Yes, in one sense he is completely incapacitated



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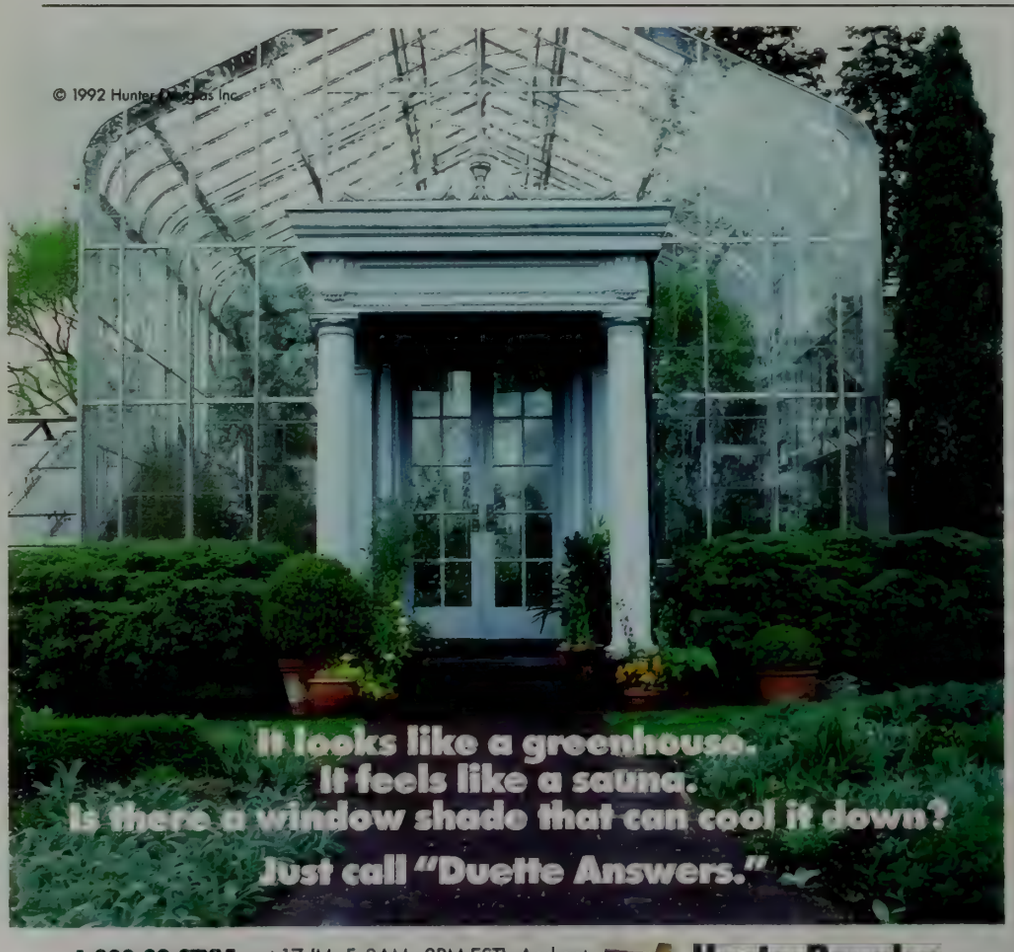
and needs around-the-clock nursing. He can't even move his hand from his clicker to the wheelchair without assistance. Yet he dominates the people around him, and not just the nurses he employs and the graduate students whose careers depend on him. He dominates everyone in his presence. He is a very strong personality."

His need to conserve words makes Hawking both epigrammatically pithy and brusquely direct, two qualities that can intimidate strangers. And his mechanical form of communication is in itself off-putting. "When you first meet him, you sit opposite him and can't see the computer screen," Morris explains. "You just see him clicking and you don't know how long it's going to take, until you finally hear the synthesized voice answer. When he knows you better, he lets you sit alongside him and you feel as you see him selecting words from the dictionary that you're not looking at him, you're working with him." The deadpan delivery of the synthesized voice makes it hard to know when Hawking—who has a very lively sense of humor—is joking. Morris once tried to quiz him on the possibility that one could see a "naked singularity," the point at the center of a black hole. According to the "cosmic censorship" hypothesis, such a singularity would always be hidden from view; but the cosmic-censorship hypothesis remains a heated topic of debate. When Morris posed the question to Hawking, there was a long pause. Finally, he tried again. "If the cosmic-censorship hypothesis is false," Morris asked, "what would you see?" There was a long, long pause, and then Hawking began to click. "Seven leather-bound volumes of Proust," said the Terminator voice. It was a paradigmatic conversation with Hawking. "You never know if Stephen is annoyed by your question and thinks you're an idiot, or is it that I think that Stephen thinks I'm an idiot, or is it a joke, or is he really annoyed but wants me to think it's a joke?" Morris reflects. "It's a hall of mirrors—like your relationship with any other person, but magnified." In Cambridge, Hawking will sometimes wheel out of a seminar at his Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics (DAMTP) in the middle of the speaker's presentation. "They never know if it's because he's pissed off and thinks it's a boring talk, or if it's just that he needs some physical thing like suction," says Alex Lyons, one of his recent research students.

The public perception of Hawking is pure mind, but as remarkable is his will, which has developed like a muscle compensating for the atrophy of all others. "I don't think I've got quite his strength of mind," his daughter, Lucy, once said, "which means he will do what he wants to do at any cost to anybody else." Associates recognize that in Hawking's hands a wheelchair is not just an aid but a weapon. "Almost everyone's first contact with him is metal," jokes Gene Stone, who organized transcripts from the film interviews into *Stephen Hawking's* A Brief History of Time: *A Reader's Companion*, a book of the movie of the book, which Bantam is publishing this month. Editor Peter Guzzardi was once standing in a cafeteria line with Hawking when the physicist's wheelchair crashed into two girls standing ahead of them. "The idea was that he lost control of the wheelchair, but I don't think so," Guzzardi says. "I think he just wanted his food. He wanted to get on with lunch." His former research student Ian Moss was accompanying him to the office one day when they discovered an occupied automobile parked in front of Hawking's wheelchair ramp. Hawking rammed into the car at full speed. "He made his point," says Moss. "The guy drove off."

Those are the flare-ups. The same fury, when harnessed, propels Hawking to the office each morning at about 11:30, and sustains him there until about seven in the evening. "If you are with him every day, he doesn't behave like someone who is sick," says Raymond Laflamme, a young physicist who works with him. "After a while, you see it's someone with a slightly different routine, but normal, like you and me." Similarly, as a parent, Stephen can be viewed as an extreme case of the doting father who adores his children—he makes a point of shopping for gifts for them on his many trips abroad—but is so preoccupied with his career that he has no time to share the household chores. What Hawking most regrets about his paralysis, he has said, is that he couldn't play physically with his young children.

In the universe of business, Hawking bristles with the hard-nosed intelligence you would expect. He was already surfeited with interviews when, a few months after publication, Freedman initiated overtures for the movie rights to the instant best-seller. Despite his august status among physicists, Hawking had



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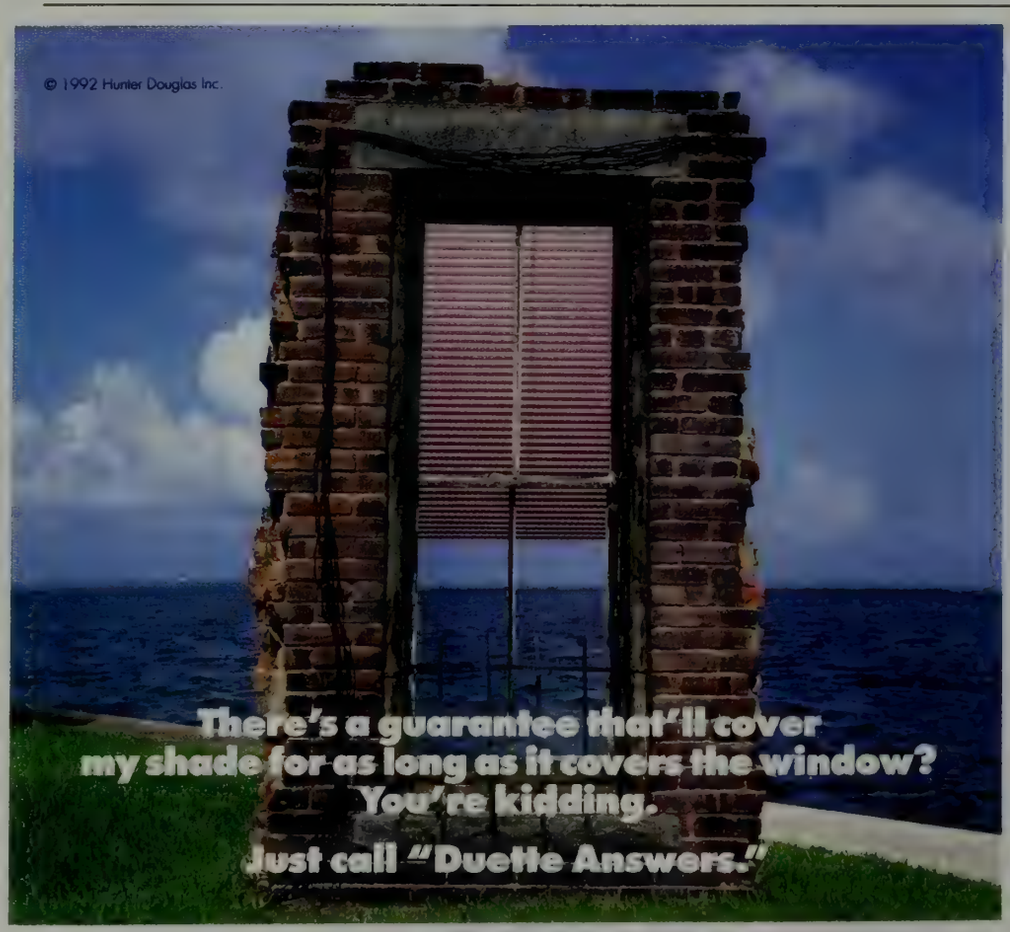
always found time for his students, and was regarded as an unusually attentive and caring mentor. Now there were so many journalists and other pilgrims crowding into DAMTP that his students couldn't get in to see him. "Before this book, DAMTP was a quiet place," says Alex Lyons. "People didn't come in off the street and start espousing their theory of the universe." Although Hawking enjoys celebrity, enough is enough. He was ready to resume his work in physics.

Freedman first met Hawking at a scientific conference in Santa Barbara. Going to an auditorium where Hawking was checking the sound system for a lecture that night, Freedman noticed the scientist's lapel button, pinned upside down and reading: I'M NEARLY FAMOUS. Elaine Mason was doing cartwheels on the stage. When it came to personal eccentricity, these people evidently could compete with your garden-variety Hollywood movie stars. Freedman won Hawking over with the promise that a movie would spread the gospel of modern physics to those unconverted heathens beyond the reach of print. The producer then had to negotiate the deal. "He has Newton's seat in mathematics," Freedman quips. "He's not going to take net points." A thirty-page contract came out of a seemingly endless exchange of phone calls and faxes. The contract was made final at the end of a late-night session at the Hawkings' house. With his wife holding his hand, Hawking pressed his thumbprint to the page.

Hawking's scientific career began only after his medical diagnosis in 1963. He was twenty-one and just starting his graduate work in theoretical physics at Cambridge University. Troubled by fits of clumsiness and difficulty in speaking, he consulted a doctor, who ordered up a series of tests. The diagnosis was A.L.S. The prognosis was a rapid, progressive loss of control of all voluntary muscles, culminating in death from pneumonia or asphyxiation within two to three years. Until that point, Hawking had been an unusually bright, fun-loving youth without much motivation. "Before my condition had been diagnosed I had been very bored with life," he has said. "There had not seemed to be anything worth doing." Unmoored by the death sentence, he neglected his research—why begin if he wouldn't live long enough to finish?—and bathed himself in melancholic waves of Wagner. Eventually he noticed that his body was not degenerating as rapidly as predicted. With that awareness came a growing affection for a young woman he had met a few weeks before his diagnosis at a party in St. Albans, the London suburb where his parents lived. Her name was Jane Wilde. She was a quiet, prim, religious girl who was finishing high school and planning to study languages. "When I met him again [after his diagnosis] he was really in a rather pathetic state," Jane recalled in a BBC documentary. "I think he had lost the will to live, or he was very confused, certainly. I think gradually together we realized that we could do something." They were married in 1965. "I didn't really know what to expect when we got married," Jane told journalist Bryan Appleyard. "I think Stephen had felt very depressed and I wanted to find some purpose to my existence...and I suppose I found it in the idea of looking after him."

Stephen's illness advanced, but as a siege, not a blitzkrieg. Outliving all the guesses, he makes the very notion of gauging his life expectancy seem absurd. When he could no longer drag himself around on canes, he reluctantly entered a wheelchair. His speech grew so slurred that the few intimates who could understand him had to translate for others. Fiercely resisting each new station of decrepitude, Hawking would tortuously haul himself up the staircase of his house by his arms rather than be carried. "In about 1972 or '73, he was just barely able to dial a telephone, and any of us could have done it for him in one-tenth of the time," recalls physicist Werner Israel. "But he still painstakingly insisted on doing it himself. He's fought every step of the way. Anything that he possibly could do for himself, no matter how much effort it cost him, he always insisted on doing."

Theoretical physics is one of the few vocations open to a person who is completely disabled. From the start, Hawking approached problems intuitively. He chose as a graduate student to work in cosmology, the study of the universe, a field that was being excitingly transformed from speculative philosophy into hard-core physics thanks to rapid advances in observational astronomy. In 1965, two radio astronomers in New Jersey detected a uniform level of weak cosmic background radiation in outer space—the physical residue of "the big-bang explosion," in which the universe began. This discovery helped transform



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the big bang from a debatable proposition to a generally accepted fact.

Also in the mid-sixties, mathematicians working with Einstein's general theory of relativity were examining the curious problem of the gravitationally completely collapsed object. Einstein himself had been uncomfortable with the notion that a star could keep collapsing until it reached a point of infinitely small size and infinitely great density. In 1965, a brilliant young English mathematician, Roger Penrose, proved that (given a few reasonable conditions) a contracting star would indeed collapse to such a point, known as a singularity—a point at which the classical rules of physics would no longer apply. Hearing about Penrose's finding, Hawking had a dazzling insight. The collapse of a star into a singularity looked very much like the big-bang explosion run in reverse. Applying Penrose's work on stars to the universe as a whole, Hawking showed that if the rules of classical general relativity were correct, the beginning of the universe was a singularity. It was the last part of his Ph.D. dissertation and his first major contribution to physics.

Gravitationally completely collapsed objects became a hot topic in physics, not least because John Wheeler of Princeton had the wit in 1968 to dub them "black holes." A black hole was black because nothing, not even light, could escape its gravitational pull. The metaphorically resonant name tickled the public imagination. Over the next few years, Hawking worked on "singularity theorems" that explored the properties of black holes. "The work he did on classical general relativity up to the end of '73 shows the most refined, the most imaginative, the most subtle examples of mathematical thought that I know of in theoretical physics," says Werner Israel.

Hawking's work on black holes climaxed in 1974 with his discovery of "Hawking radiation." From an astronomer's viewpoint, this meant that black holes are not really black—they emit radiation and could eventually evaporate. Hawking radiation had even more profound implications for theoretical physics. "The first step in marrying general relativity and quantum theory is to learn how quantum fields behave when they're in a classical curved space-time," says California Institute of Technology physicist Kip Thorne. "That was achieved in large measure thanks to Hawking radiation. In large measure it was the struggle to understand whether Stephen was right or not that brought the first step of the marriage to fruition."



Jane and Stephen Hawking at home in Cambridge, 1987.

"I felt myself very much the household drudge," Jane once reflected, "and Stephen was getting all the glittering prizes."

A few years earlier, Hawking had hypothesized the existence of tiny primordial black holes, of an atomic scale, that would have been formed in the very hot early universe. Since the bigger the black hole, the lower its temperature, there was never any hope of detecting Hawking radiation from a black hole of stellar size. However, these tiny black holes could get so hot that they would explode, and the burst of gamma radiation would be detectable. For some heady moments, Hawking and his students thought that they might observe such radiation. "If there were these little black holes and one saw them evaporate, that would be an astounding discovery, and it would certainly be the experimental evidence that would win Hawking the Nobel Prize," says Don Page, a physicist who has worked closely with Hawking. The Nobel committee requires observational evidence for theory before awarding a prize. When gamma-ray bursts were detected in the mid-seventies, Hawking's associates were thrilled—until they realized that this was not the radiation predicted by the theory and had a different source. Most scientists now believe that the conditions in the early universe would not have produced many tiny black holes, so we are unlikely ever to see one evaporate. Since Hawking's later work is even less subject to experimental verification, he probably won't ever win a Nobel Prize.

Hawking's bloody-minded tenacity was tested to the limit in 1976, when he suffered a life-threatening attack of pneumonia. "I think Stephen became aware for the first time that he was in imminent peril of dying," says Alan Lapedes, an American student who was living with the Hawkings at the time. A brief, unsuccessful stay in the hospital was followed by a long, dicey convalescence at home. "It was a shock to Jane and to Stephen," Lapedes says. "They were following the British tradition of stiff upper lip, you keep soldiering on. There came a period when the soldiering had no more forward momentum." After he had regained some strength, Hawking made a point of contacting the important people in his life, including a visit to his undergraduate tutor at Oxford, who had encouraged him to study theoretical physics. "Stephen had realized how close he had come," Lapedes says, "and he wanted to say things to people while he still had a chance to do so."

It's uncertain what effect this enhanced perception of his own mortality had on Hawking's career. What is clear, however, is that in the mid-seventies he underwent what Werner Israel calls "a complete change of life, almost a career change." Instead of the very mathematical, rigorous papers with their format of theorem, proof, theorem, proof, Hawking was now venturing into speculative

IAN BERRY

and controversial areas. "He wanted to know the answers to the mysteries of the universe, and he wanted to know them in his lifetime," says Kip Thorne. "He switched over into demanding a level of rigor that was high enough that he could be almost certain that he was right, and then move on and let other people clean it up afterwards." When Thorne asked him about the change, Hawking replied, "I would rather be right than rigorous."

The very nature of the problems he was now pondering invited a more freewheeling approach. Studying quantum effects in black holes had led Hawking into the most ambitious, elusive quest in physics: a union of quantum theory with general relativity, in what is referred to as quantum gravity or, more grandiloquently, the theory of everything. Only a theory of quantum gravity could do away with the singularities of classical general relativity that Hawking and Penrose had located at the center of a black hole and at the beginning of the universe. To a physicist, there is something inherently ugly in a theory (like general relativity) that predicts occurrences (like singularities) that it cannot explain. As ugliness sweeps the fields of music, painting, and sculpture, physics may be the final refuge for the ideal of beauty in the modern world.

Hawking was also pursuing the big questions: how the universe began, and how it will end. In a conference at the Vatican in 1981, he took his greatest leap into the unknown and presented what he called the "no boundary" proposal. Instead of thinking of the universe as beginning at a point, the "no boundary" proposal imagines a universe that is finite but lacks an edge. One can picture such a situation in two dimensions quite easily—it would resemble the surface of the earth, where if you head north toward the North Pole, you will eventually reach it, but if you keep going, you will not fall off. What Hawking did (in collaboration with University of California, Santa Barbara, physicist James Hartle) was develop such a model in four dimensions. "It's a very abstract concept," says Kip Thorne. "You have to feel comfortable with the idea of four-dimensional space-time and the relationship between that and a four-dimensional space that doesn't have any time in it. It's not a foundation that one can acquire without an enormous amount of effort."

Racing ahead, Hawking has pioneered a whole field of quantum cosmology that looks at "the quantum wave function of the universe." As in his youth, he is trying to understand how the universe began. In so doing, he has postulated the existence of all sorts of exotica, such as "baby universes," which could pop out of another universe like a bubble puckering off a balloon. It is possible that our own viewable universe is one of a countless number of universes in existence, connected only by tiny wormholes the size of a quantum fluctuation on the surface of the cosmic balloon. If you think this sounds wild, you're not alone. "Wave function of the early universe is closer to mathematical philosophy than to physics," says David Schramm. Unlike Hawking's earlier work, which might be verified if only we had more powerful observational instruments, his work in quantum cosmology seems hopelessly unprovable.

Unmoored by the death sentence, Hawking neglected his research and bathed himself in melancholic waves of Wagner.

From the opposite vantage point, researchers in "string theory"—which is where much of the action in physics is today—believe Hawking's model is far too simple. *Their* theory is even more dizzying than his. "The theoreticians have gotten so far ahead of the observations that problems like the one Hawking is working on are not going to be solved in our lifetime," says cosmologist Tony Rothman, author of *A Physicist on Madison Avenue*. "People get frustrated at working on a cathedral they're not going to see finished." Or as Harvard's Sidney Coleman more cheerfully puts it, "Are we really getting somewhere or are we running in circles? Difficult to tell, but we're having fun. It exercises the mind."

While the "no boundary" notion lacks proof, it does not lack implications, particularly religious ones. "So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a creator," Hawking wrote in *A Brief History of Time*. "But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be. What place, then, for a creator?" Such statements abrasively scratch the sensibilities of people who believe in God. Nowhere was that more true than in Hawking's own home.

Jane Hawking was raised as a devout Anglican. "If I hadn't had my faith strongly enforced, particularly by my mother, I wouldn't have been able to live in this situation—I wouldn't have been able to marry Stephen in the first place—because I wouldn't have had the optimism to carry me through," she said three years ago. Early in their marriage, Jane stopped attending church regularly. In part, she was retreating under the withering, skeptical barrage of her brilliant husband. From the basic viewpoint of time management, however, she couldn't do much of anything but look after Stephen and their growing family. "When I married him I knew there was not going to be the possibility of my having a career, that our household could only accommodate one career and that had to be Stephen's," she once told *The Guardian*'s Ellen Walton. "Nevertheless, I have to say I found it very difficult and very frustrating in those early years. I felt myself very much the household drudge and Stephen was getting all the glittering prizes."

In the winter of 1978–79, while pregnant with her third child, Jane took a critical step toward reclaiming her life. She resumed going to church. The significance of the act was that this was something she was doing for herself, not for Stephen or the children. It took on greater resonance when she began singing in the choir, recultivating the love of classical music that she had suppressed as a full-time wife and mother. Finally, it was at church that she met Jonathan Jones, a younger man who played the harpsichord in a Baroque-music ensemble. Self-effacing, religious, and artistic, Jonathan was everything that Stephen was not. By all accounts, he got along well with Stephen. He moved into the Hawking house as "a friend of the family." The relationship between Jonathan and Jane was initially platonic, but as time passed, their special affinity became obvious.

Where did this leave Stephen? Working, as usual, and traveling. High-level physicists spend a good deal of time jetting around the world to conferences. Hawking has always maintained a fre-

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netic travel schedule, exhausting the graduate students who go with him. Over the last decade, Jane was accompanying him on fewer and fewer of these trips. She disliked the retinue of students and (in later years) nurses and journalists who tagged along. She called it "a circus."

At the time that honors were being heaped on him, Hawking seemed immeasurably lonely. Werner Israel remembers a time five years ago when Jane and the children were away and Stephen would go to the movies every night. "He asked if I would go to the cinema with him one night," Israel says. "I was leaving the next morning to give a thesis examination and I hadn't yet read the thesis paper. I said, 'I'm sorry, Stephen, I can't.' He said, '*Please*.' And Stephen never says that. I couldn't. I had a thesis paper to read. But I felt very bad about it." Adds Israel's wife, Inge, "Sometimes I've felt there was no one in the world I've ever met who is as lonely as Stephen."

In the summer of 1985, Jane was traveling in Germany when Stephen, working in Geneva, suffered another life-threatening bout of pneumonia. Unable to breathe, he was rushed to the hospital. Hawking was very near death. "If he had seven lives," says Raymond Laflamme, then a research student, "certainly one is gone." When she arrived at the bedside, Jane authorized a tracheostomy to facilitate breathing. "It was my decision for him to have a tracheostomy," she said. "But I have sometimes thought, What have I done? What sort of life have I let him in for?" The tracheostomy eliminated Stephen's capacity for speech. "If you're in a position where you're completely disabled and the one thing you can do is speak to people who understand you, the idea of losing your voice is horrific," says Brian Whitt, one of Hawking's research students at the time. Hawking's students scrambled to come up with ways to communicate with their stricken teacher. The only device that worked was a clear piece of plastic marked with letters. Holding it up, a student could guess from the angle of Hawking's glance which letter he wanted. A lift of the eyebrows would confirm it. In this laborious manner, Hawking could spell out words.

Hearing of the physicist's plight, a computer scientist in California sent Hawking a software program designed to help disabled people converse. Hawking ignored it. "He was antagonistic to the idea of using a computer," Whitt says, "because he wanted to regain the ability to speak." Whitt remembers the first time he saw Hawking ask to use the computer. Taken from his bed to the machine, the physicist arduously typed out a sentence. When Whitt read it, he saw to his elation that Hawking, with characteristic pluck, had taken stock of his remaining resources and was looking to the future. Hawking's message read: "Can you help me finish the book?"

He had begun the book as a way to popularize his work and, more practically, to pay his daughter's school fees. The need for money was now urgent. The tracheostomy required round-the-clock nurses to suction fluid out of his lungs and monitor his condition. Without an annual grant of about $100,000 from an American foundation, he could not have afforded to leave the hospital and return home.

When in 1984 he signed his contract with Bantam for a $250,000 advance for the North American rights, Hawking submitted a slim manuscript that would have made a seventy-page book. Over the next years, replying to the detailed questions of his editor, Peter Guzzardi, he expanded the manuscript threefold. Bantam wanted to hire a collaborator to help him, but Hawking adamantly refused. Confident of his book's commercial prospects, Hawking chose Bantam as his publisher in part because Guzzardi emphasized the company's intention to sell it in airport bookstores. "He's a visionary," Guzzardi says. "He always saw this book as a No. 1 best-seller." Guzzardi left Bantam just before the book's publication; to Hawking's annoyance, the company scheduled a first printing of only 40,000. Everyone was astonished when the first edition sold out within a few days. Everyone, that is, but Hawking. "I think he accepted it as his due," Guzzardi says. "Look what he does when he sets his mind to it. He wards off death. He has a family and three kids when he is told he has six months to live. Writing a best-seller is not such a big deal."

Millions have bought the book. How many have read it is another question. In a column thought to be so witty that *The Times* of London reproduced it on posters in the underground, Bernard Levin wrote that, personally, he couldn't get beyond page 29. Hawking's prose style is elegant, but the terseness that his disability demands can be a problem for readers unfamiliar with science. The

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book may be even more frustrating for those readers who *are* scientifically literate. With minimal signposting, *A Brief History of Time* veers, two-thirds of the way through, from straightforward cosmology and particle physics into Hawking's highly controversial work in quantum cosmology. "What he's trying to get into in the latter part of the book, I don't know how to explain to the lay public," says Kip Thorne. "I don't think it is possible."

Some critics object to the way Hawking finesses the gap between accepted science and questionable theory. "One of his graduate students once explained to me that whatever Stephen says, he says it as if it is the truth," Brian Whitt remarks. "As long as he thinks it is probably what happened, he'll assert it as fact. His way of saying there is some doubt is not to say there is some doubt, but to stop saying it so often or so publicly. He's not going to say it's wrong unless you prove it to him."

Stubbornness and arrogance are the pejorative synonyms for the grit and single-mindedness that have kept Hawking going. In the physics community, some colleagues "think of him as the oracle giving us things from on high," Kip Thorne jokes. In the tighter confines of his own home, Hawking's obstinacy was less of a laughing matter. But how could a wife object, knowing that it was this tenacity that was keeping her husband alive? "Some people would call it determination, some obstinacy—I've called it both at one time or another," Jane Hawking has said. With the great financial success of his book and the constant presence of nurses, Stephen no longer relied on Jane to care for him. His physical needs were met; only his emotional demands remained. Freed of her quasi-religious vocation to care for Stephen, Jane vented her long-simmering resentments. She rankled at Stephen's public pronouncements on the limited role for God in the universe. "He is delving into realms that really do matter to thinking people and in a way that can have a very disturbing effect on people. . . and he's not competent," she told Bryan Appleyard at the time of the book's publication. "But I pronounce my view that there are different ways of approaching it and his mathematical way is only one way—and he just smiles." Instead of ministering to Stephen's needs, her role was now "simply to tell him that he's not God." Guzzardi once told Jane he thought it was wonderful that, after so many years of helping Stephen and raising a family, she could get back to her interest in music and languages. Laughing bitterly, Jane walked over to her husband and put her arm around him. "Yes, Stephen," she said, "it's all worked out perfectly, hasn't it?" Research students in Stephen's department thought Jane patronized him. She was constantly warning him of things he shouldn't do, treating him like an invalid.

In contrast was Elaine Mason, the effervescent nurse who had immediately won Hawking's affection by refusing to treat him like an invalid. Unlike Jane, Mason relished the constant carnival that whirled about Hawking. The complete lack of privacy that Jane hated apparently didn't bother Mason. She knows how to have a good time. She is, says a former Hawking research student, "one of the very positive, upbeat women that Stephen gets on with." Right about the time of the book's publication, friends detected hints that their relationship was exceeding the bounds of patient-nurse. "Because of the disease, people viewed Jane as caring for Stephen in every way," says David Schramm. "In fact, in the later years, that's not been true. Elaine has been caring for him. It's clear that there's real emotion there." At a workshop in Jerusalem at the end of 1989, Stephen confirmed the year-old rumors and told friends that he would be moving out of the house he shared with Jane and their youngest child, Timothy, now thirteen, and into a modern luxury flat with Mason. Jane was distraught at the news. She reportedly urged Mason and Hawking instead to join her and Jonathan Jones. But the two women don't get along, and it was not a situation that Mason could accept. After a tense transition period, the mood has become more tranquil—both Jane and Elaine attended Stephen's fiftieth-birthday party, last January.

"He wanted to know the answers to the mysteries of the universe, and he wanted to know them in his lifetime."

All who know them report that Mason and Hawking seem very much in love. He was observed chasing her down a hotel corridor in his wheelchair at a conference in Kyoto last summer.

Not since the public infatuation with Einstein's aureole of white hair has a scientist had such a popular following as Hawking. There is a Stephen Hawking fan club. Scalpers hawk tickets to his sold-out public lectures. Partly, it's the *Zeitgeist:* the literate population seems more interested in science than at any time since the euphoria of the space program in the late fifties.

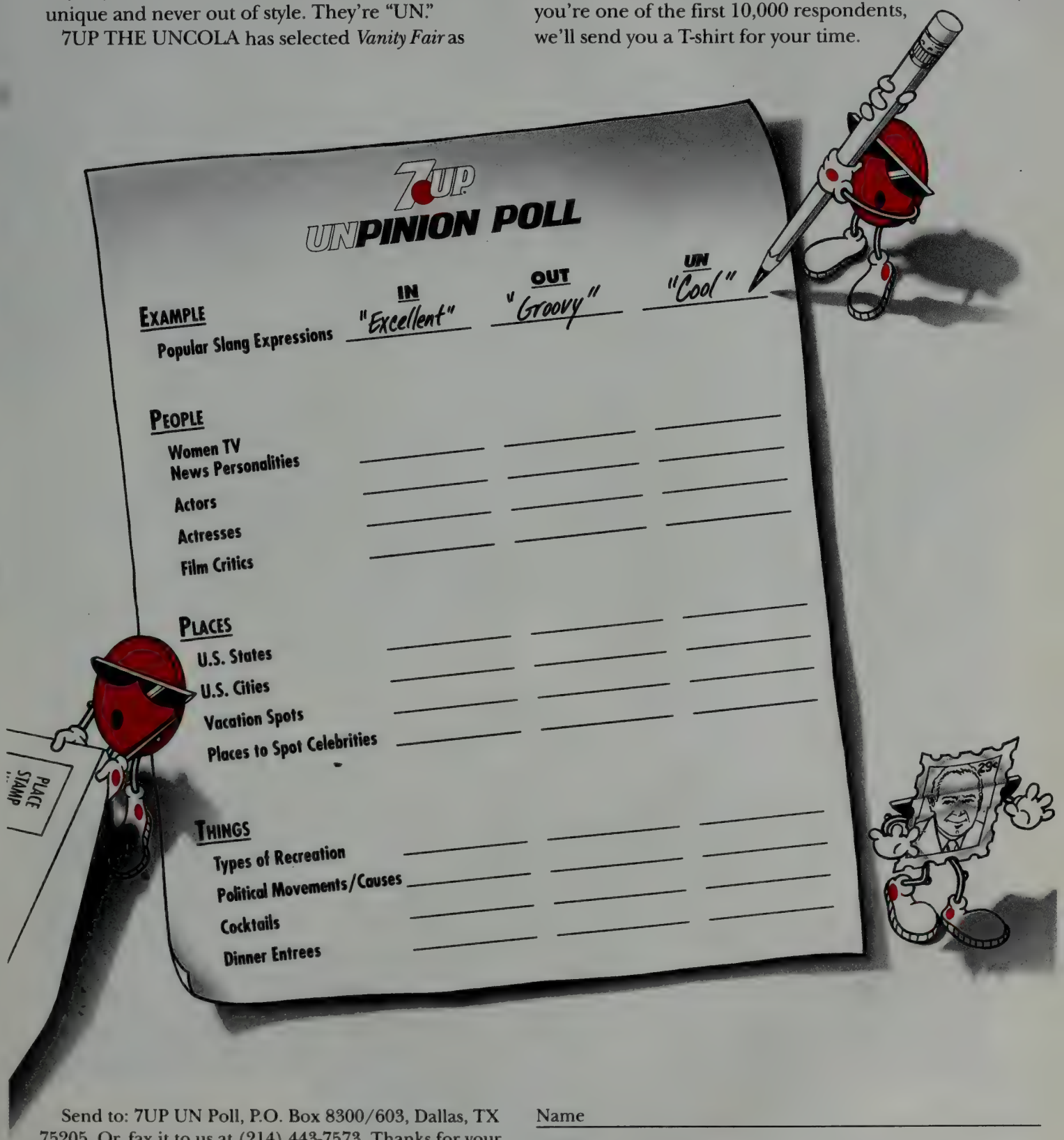
There is also, ironically, a religious component to the Hawking phenomenon. Errol Morris calls it millenarian. People want answers to cosmic questions, and Hawking isn't afraid to comply. As philosophy has retreated into technical areas of logic and language, physicists like Hawking have rushed into the vacuum. "Certainly the gap is being closed between science and the most basic questions that the human mind can ask," says Werner Israel. "We are not afraid in science to ask these questions. The physicists become the philosophers."

As his fame approaches that of Einstein, the general public seems inclined to believe that Hawking has made a similar contribution to physics. Journalists inevitably point out that Hawking, like Newton before him, is the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. Although physics is moving so rapidly that we may not in our lifetime know how important Hawking's work is, the comparisons to Einstein, let alone to Newton, are media hype. "Hawking is a brilliant scientist who has had an enormous impact on his field, and he is certainly one of the leading figures of our time," says his friend James Hartle. "But don't characterize him in popular terms that he couldn't hope to meet. Einstein, Newton, Bohr—it's no disservice to a scientist to say he or she is not in the same league as those people." Barring some unanticipated breakthrough in quantum cosmology, Hawking will not change the rules of physics. He will not overturn the way we comprehend the universe. Instead, he may be best remembered for his valiant demonstration of how much a human being can accomplish against all odds. The victim of a cosmic joke, he has had the last laugh. His greatest legacy may be his smile. □

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Rapper May May keeps her eye on the prize.

May. *Oui*

Like her dad (Muhammad Ali), new rapper May May floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee, championing idealism with a fighter's wallop. On her debut album, *The Introduction,* she sounds like a winner as she confidently mouths off on the lack of social responsibility shown by other recording artists. "It's important to be healthy," she says, "but it's not important to look like Cindy Crawford all the time or drive a Mercedes."

Raised by her grandparents after her parents divorced, May May says she's had a solid relationship with her dad, despite his initial skepticism over her pursuing a rap career. "He never stopped being a father," she says. Or a fighter. —MICHAEL MUSTO

STYLED BY KIM MEEHAN

Photograph by RUVEN AFANADOR

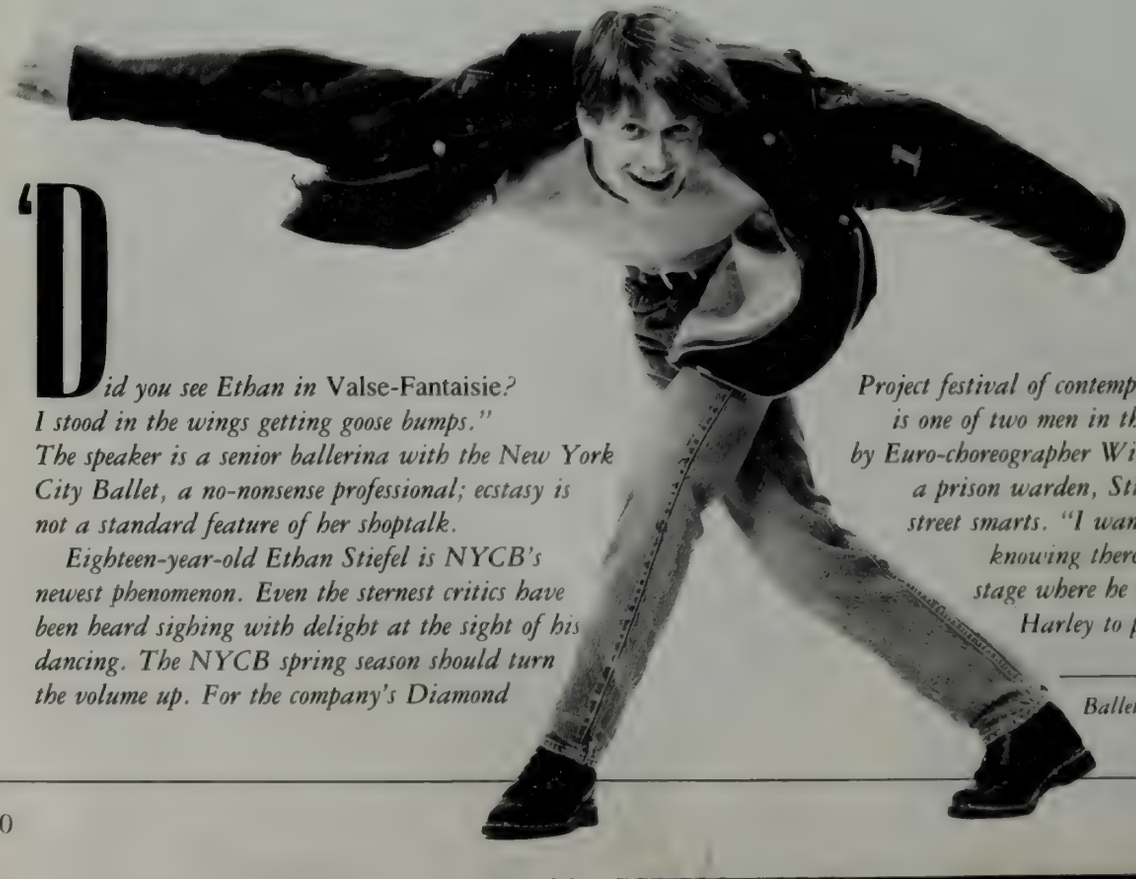
Hot Type



Robert Harris *Dalma Heyn* *David McCullough* *Annie Dillard* *Bryan Burrough*

In her debut novel, **The Living** (HarperCollins), Annie Dillard chronicles the life of a turn-of-the-century Puget Sound town. Bryan Burrough, co-author of *Barbarians at the Gate*, exposes the war between American Express and billionaire Edmond Safra in **Vendetta** (HarperCollins). **Hole in the Sky** (Knopf), by William Kittredge, is a memoir of the decline of the author's ranching family and the Wild West it pioneered. Ten years' research has gone into David McCullough's monumental biography, **Truman** (Simon & Schuster). **All the Pretty Horses** (Knopf) is a West Texas and south-of-the-border 1940s odyssey from novelist Cormac McCarthy. Doris Lessing presents haunting stories of contemporary London in **The Real Thing** (HarperCollins). Editors of *The Angolite*, and life-sentencees for murder, Wilbert Rideau and Ron Wikberg examine the social costs of life behind bars in **Life Sentences** (Times Books). **Underworld** (Poseidon) is the first work of fiction by British journalist Peter Conrad. Nigerian author Ben Okri won this year's Booker Prize for his novel **The Famished Road** (Doubleday). In **The Erotic Silence of the American Wife** (Turtle Bay), Dalma Heyn explores women's changing perceptions of extramarital sex. George Anders investigates the high-stakes world of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts in **Merchants of Debt** (BasicBooks). Dorothy is still in Kansas, sort of, in **Was** (Knopf), a novel by British writer Geoff Ryman. Hitler turns seventy-five in **Fatherland** (Random House), a surreal suspense novel by journalist Robert Harris. And **The White Rhino Hotel** (Viking) is an adventure novel set in East Africa, by activist and lawyer Bartle Bull.

'Stiefel Towers



"Did you see Ethan in Valse-Fantaisie*? I stood in the wings getting goose bumps." The speaker is a senior ballerina with the New York City Ballet, a no-nonsense professional; ecstasy is not a standard feature of her shoptalk.*

Eighteen-year-old Ethan Stiefel is NYCB's newest phenomenon. Even the sternest critics have been heard sighing with delight at the sight of his dancing. The NYCB spring season should turn the volume up. For the company's Diamond Project festival of contemporary choreography, Stiefel is one of two men in the latest American premiere by Euro-choreographer William Forsythe. The son of a prison warden, Stiefel has an offstage rep for street smarts. "I want a life," he says, already knowing there is more to his than just a stage where he can "kick ass." He's got a Harley to prove it. —OTIS STUART

Ballet's newest bad boy.

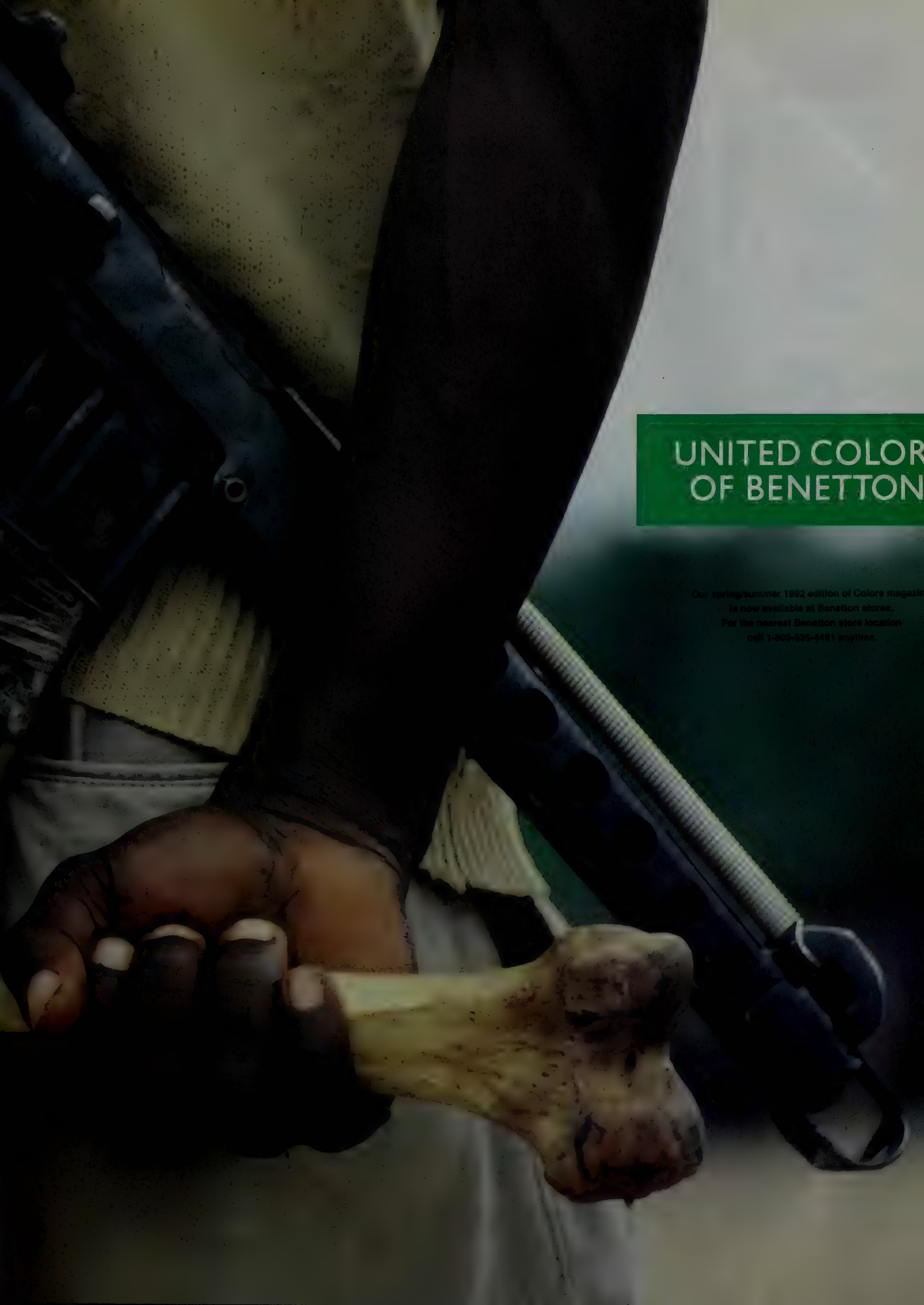
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Kostiff Living

As a resident of London with her spiritual home in Rio, German-born Gerlinda Kostiff is perhaps the original "citizen of the world." Currently Britain's reigning diva of the night, she is the hostess of "Kinky Gerlinky," a decadent festival that many regard as the best club night in Europe. Kostiff: "I was inspired by the Mardi Gras in Rio, so I brought a bit to London." With near-monthly frequency over the last three years, she and husband Michael have played host to drag queens, celebrities, and minor European royalty. Most months see hundreds of stunned tourists gawking at the pageant parading through the Kinky door at the Empire Ballroom on Leicester Square.



HUGH HALES-TOOKE

Despite having spent a lot of time in Miami recently, Kostiff says that Kinky is not going to move across the Atlantic. "But I am planning something in Miami that's going to be fabulous—it's going to be a fusion of fashion and music." For the moment, Kostiff is content to host her club, "where everyone can be part of the show," and is planning to take Kinky on summer holiday to Amsterdam and Venice. "I like to do clubs that are not full of voyeurs in cities where people take part." —TYLER BRÛLÉ

Night-table Reading



Spalding Gray *(actor, author):* Open Secrets, *by Walter Truett Anderson (Tarcher). "I call it the* Reader's Digest *of Tibetan Buddhism."*



Teri Garr *(actress):* Double Cross, *by Sam and Chuck Giancana (Warner). "I am fascinated by mobsters, by whatever that common thread is that makes them have to defy the laws that govern society."*



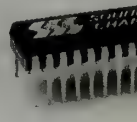
Fab 5 Freddy *(rap impresario):* High Cotton, *by Darryl Pinckney (Farrar, Straus and Giroux). "It's about this middle-class black guy; it's amazing, and it's funny. Anybody should read this because everybody likes to laugh."*

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Watergate

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Produced by SUSAN MERCANDETTI

Remember where you were at 2:30 A.M. on Saturday, June 17, 1972, as District of Columbia detectives arrested five "burglars" at the Watergate complex? In bed. O.K. Remember where you were at nine P.M. on Thursday, August 8, 1974, when the thirty-seventh president of the United States spoke from the Oval Office for the thirty-seventh time? Glued to the tube, present at the destruction. For live Greek tragedy, what could equal the sad thrill of hearing him utter those long-awaited words: "*Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow*"?

If the assassination of John F. Kennedy shocked America out of its golden age, Watergate caused the nation to lose what faith it had left in itself. After the military helicopter lifted off from the South Lawn, carrying the disgraced president into exile, there was a great sigh of relief followed by a lot of rejoicing about how the system worked, how a constitutional crisis had been avoided, how the military had not taken power, how the Supreme Court still reigned supreme. But these self-reassurances had a forced quality to them, as if survivors of a devastating earthquake were congratulating themselves that it had only reached 8 on the Richter scale.

Watergate produced a generation of cynics at a time when the country needed a new generation of idealists. How many young people decided not to go into public service because the highest public servants turned out to be crooks will never be known, but their absence seems apparent in today's political climate of mistrust, pettiness, and irrelevance.

Those were, as the traditional Chinese curse has it, pretty interesting times to be alive: Saturday Night Massacres, smoking guns, stonewalling, hanging tough, twisting slowly, slowly in the wind. And a lot of low comedy in high places, or high comedy in low places (your call): Liddy telling Dean he was willing to stand on a designated street corner and be shot, if that's what the higher-ups wanted; Dean replying, "I don't think we've gotten *there* yet, Gordon." Haig opining that the 18½-minute gap must have been caused by "some sinister force." The tropes of all the president's men: "We have a cancer within, close to the presidency, that is growing" (Dean). "Once the toothpaste is out of the tube, it's hard to get it back in" (Haldeman). "I lost my ethical compass" (Magruder). "It would have been simpler to have shot them all" (Mitchell, in a reflective mood). "I would like to discuss the most important issue confronting this nation, and confronting us internationally too—inflation" (Nixon, three days before resigning).

Among the dramatis personae, many of whom are featured in Annie Leibovitz's remarkable portfolio, only John Mitchell did not make it to this twentieth-anniversary . . . is celebration the right word? . . . observance. What has happened to the rest? You'll find out about some in the following pages. Just keep in mind: time wounds all heals. —CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY


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"I'm prepared to go down with the ship."

G. Gordon Liddy

The ex–F.B.I. agent, pilot, weapons specialist, lawyer, and former aide on Ehrlichman's staff was hired by John Mitchell as a finance counsel to CREEP. As a Plumber, Liddy spent almost $300,000 on dirty tricks and planned the Watergate break-ins with Howard Hunt. He was convicted for the break-in, for conspiring on the Ellsberg raid, and for contempt of court. He spent more than fifty-two months in jail, the longest sentence served by any of the co-conspirators, steeling himself by singing the anthem of the Third Reich. He wrote a best-selling memoir, *Will* (renowned for its accounts of eating rats and burning hands), and has appeared in TV series (including *Miami Vice* and *MacGyver*). He is still a popular lecturer and hosts a Washington-area lunchtime radio show (on WJFK). He also offers private-security services and runs the G. Gordon Liddy Institute, an anti-terrorist school. Liddy, who drives a Volvo with the license plate H2O-GATE, lives in Maryland, where he keeps an extensive collection of guns and assassination weapons. He is photographed here at the lookout site in Room 723 of the Howard Johnson's across from the Watergate complex.



"The Post is going to have damnable, damnable problems out of this."

--Richard Nixon

Ben Bradlee and Katharine Graham

Kay Graham's first major decision as publisher of *The Washington Post* was to hire Ben Bradlee, who became executive editor in 1967. Her second was to defy lawyers' warnings and print excerpts of the Pentagon Papers in 1971—two days after taking the *Post* company public. As Bradlee says, "She's got the balls of a burglar." The following year, she backed Bradlee on the decision that made him the most influential editor of his generation: to stand behind Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein—two young journalists working with anonymous sources—on their explosive investigation of Watergate.

Often referred to as the most powerful woman in the country, Graham retired as publisher in 1979 and as C.E.O. of the $1.4 billion Washington Post Company in 1991, although she is still an active chairman. She is now writing her memoirs. Bradlee retired as editor in chief last year, but is still vice-president-at-large. He worked on this month's CBS Watergate documentary.









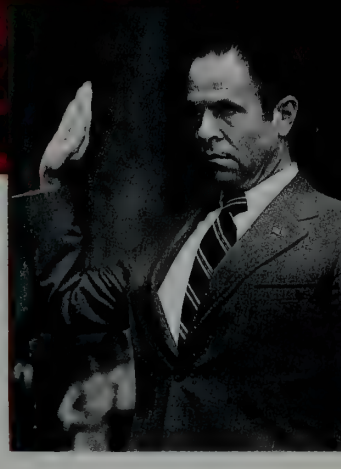
"The president is the government."

John Ehrlichman

The assistant to the president for domestic affairs, an erstwhile Eagle Scout, supervised the Plumbers and approved the break-in of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office. After resigning, he was convicted of conspiracy to obstruct justice and perjury in the Watergate cover-up and of conspiracy in the Ellsberg raid. He served eighteen months in prison. Upon his release, in 1978, he grew a beard, took up gardening, moved into an adobe house in Santa Fe, and worked on community projects with Native Americans. He has written best-selling spy novels, including *The Company*, and his memoirs, *Witness to Power*. He now lives in Atlanta, where he works for a multinational consulting firm and is writing a novel about the impeachment of a president.



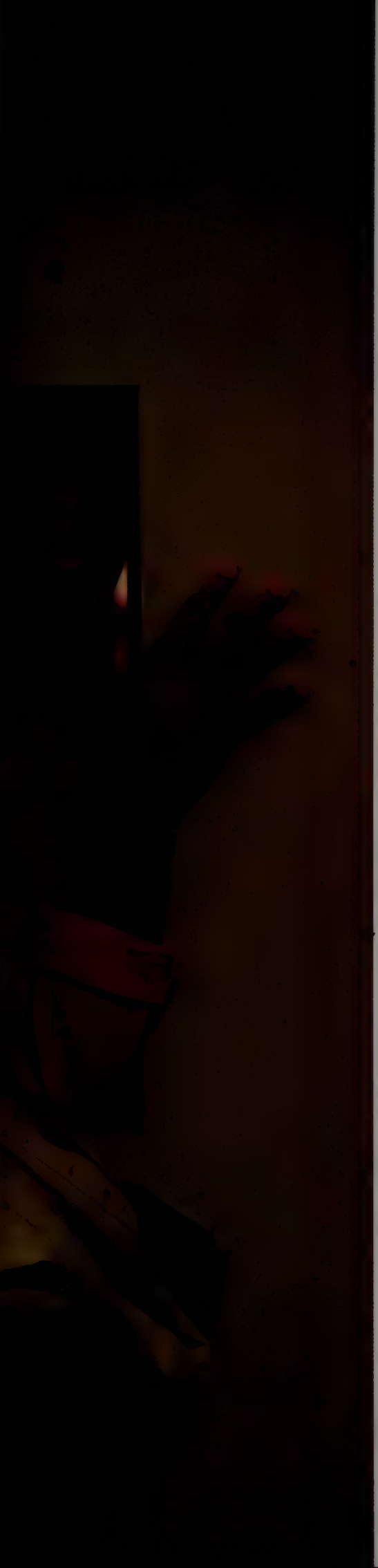
"I'm the president's son of a bitch."

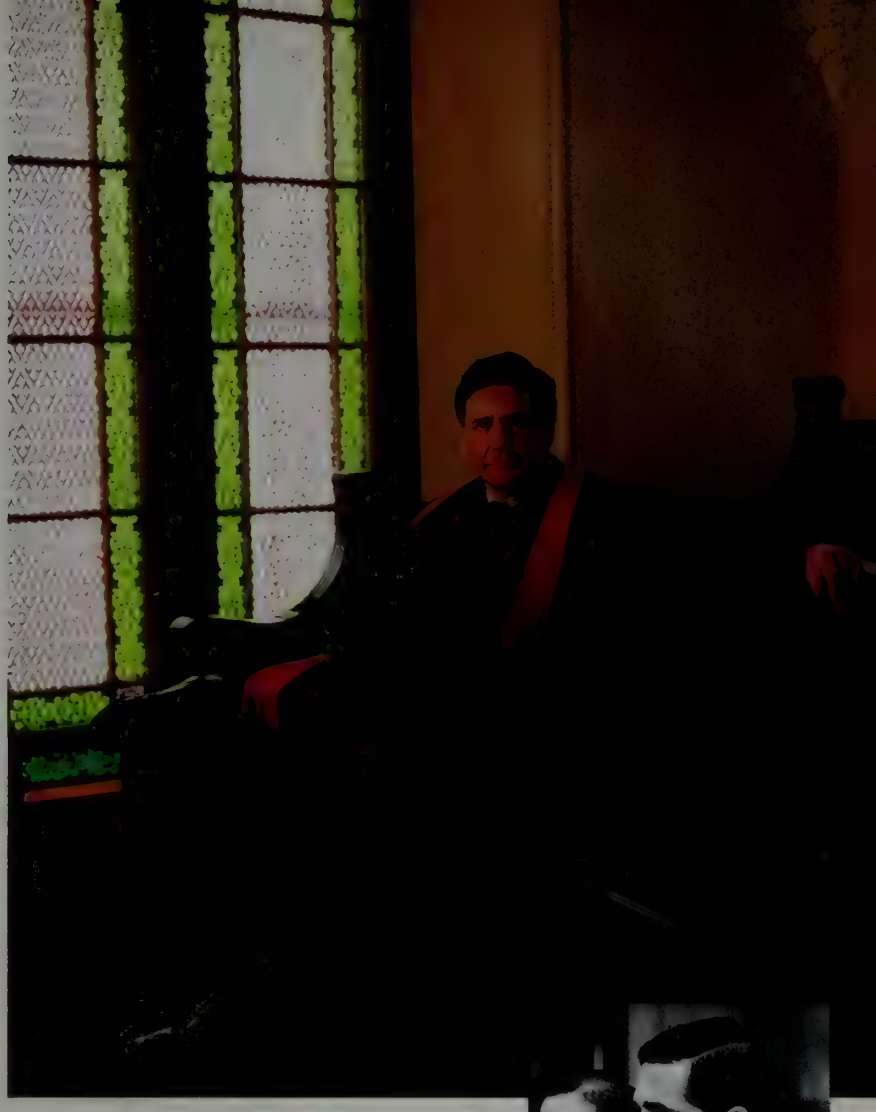


H. R. Haldeman

The former J. Walter Thompson ad exec—whose accounts included Black Flag and Sani-Flush—was Nixon's intimidating chief of staff. Haldeman's stranglehold on access to the Oval Office was dubbed "the Berlin Wall." His voice was the other one lost in the infamous 18½-minute gap, a conversation that took place three days after the Watergate break-in. He also conferred with Nixon on the "Smoking Gun" tape, when the president proposed to have the C.I.A. warn the F.B.I. off its investigation—a recording that proved Nixon was in on the cover-up. Haldeman resigned and was convicted of conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and perjury. After eighteen months in jail, he wrote a best-selling memoir, *The Ends of Power*. Now a California real-estate developer, he is part owner of nine Sizzler steak houses in Florida and two Radisson hotels.


"Colson would do anything.
He's got the balls
of a brass monkey."
--Richard Nixon







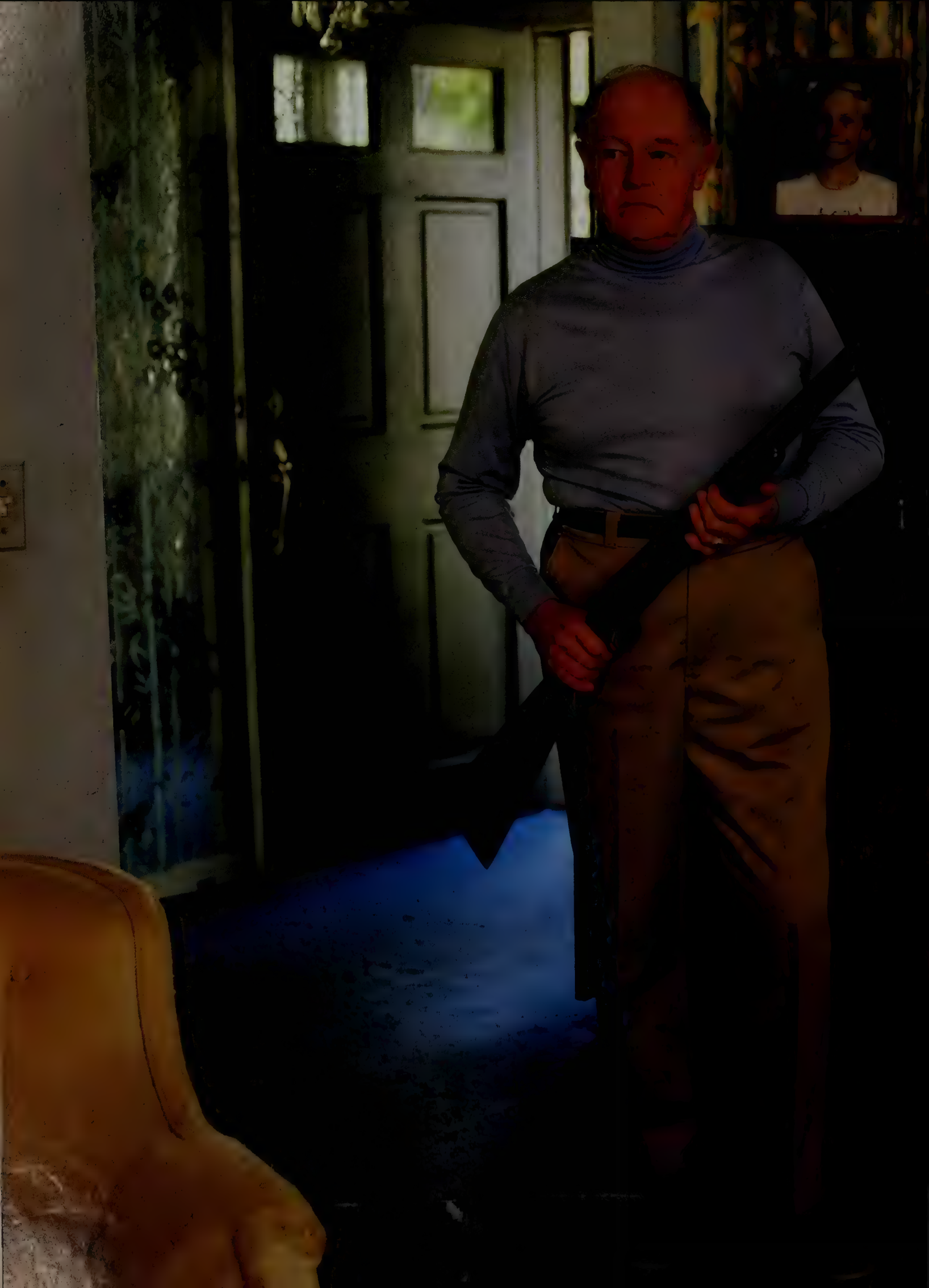
The Reverend Jeb Stuart Magruder

An aide to Bob Haldeman, Jeb Magruder became deputy campaign director at CREEP. He supervised both break-ins at the Watergate complex. After pleading guilty at the Watergate Seven trial to perjury and conspiracy to obstruct justice, Magruder served seven months in prison. In 1981, the former ladies' cosmetics salesman graduated from the Princeton Theological Seminary with a master's degree in divinity. He is now senior minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Lexington, Kentucky. He sought but was denied a pardon from President Ronald Reagan in 1983.

Chuck Colson



Colson, the youngest company commander in the history of the Marines, was known around the White House as the administration's "evil genius." The special counsel to the president's wilder brainstorms reportedly included fabricating documents, disseminating false information on Daniel Ellsberg, and toying with the idea of firebombing the Brookings Institution. In 1973, he pleaded guilty to a charge of obstructing justice in the Ellsberg case, served seven months in prison, and became a born-again Christian. For the past fifteen years, he has been a lay minister and chairman of Prison Fellowship Ministries. He declined an offer to assume leadership of the PTL, but has co-hosted Pat Robertson's *700 Club* TV show. His books include *Born Again* and *Life Sentence*.



"We have no defense. The evidence against us is overwhelming."



E. Howard Hunt

A career C.I.A. man and a successful spy novelist, Hunt was hired in 1971 by fellow Brown alumnus Chuck Colson as one of the White House Plumbers. He allegedly traced White House leaks, disseminated damaging and false information on key Democrats, and helped coordinate both the Ellsberg and Watergate break-ins. Fired by John Ehrlichman, he agreed to plead guilty at the Watergate Seven trial after reportedly being promised clemency by Chuck Colson.

Hunt served thirty-three months in prison after his conviction for burglary, conspiracy, and wiretapping. In 1980, the former Bay of Pigs strategist won a libel suit against the Liberty Lobby, which had implicated him in the assassination of J.F.K. In 1985, the decision was overturned. His C.I.A. years as the Montevideo, Uruguay, station chief became a subject of Norman Mailer's *Harlot's Ghost*. Now a resident of Miami, Hunt spends his time writing—his seventy-four books include his memoirs, *Under Cover*—and enjoying his gun collection.



"Our cocks are on the chopping block."

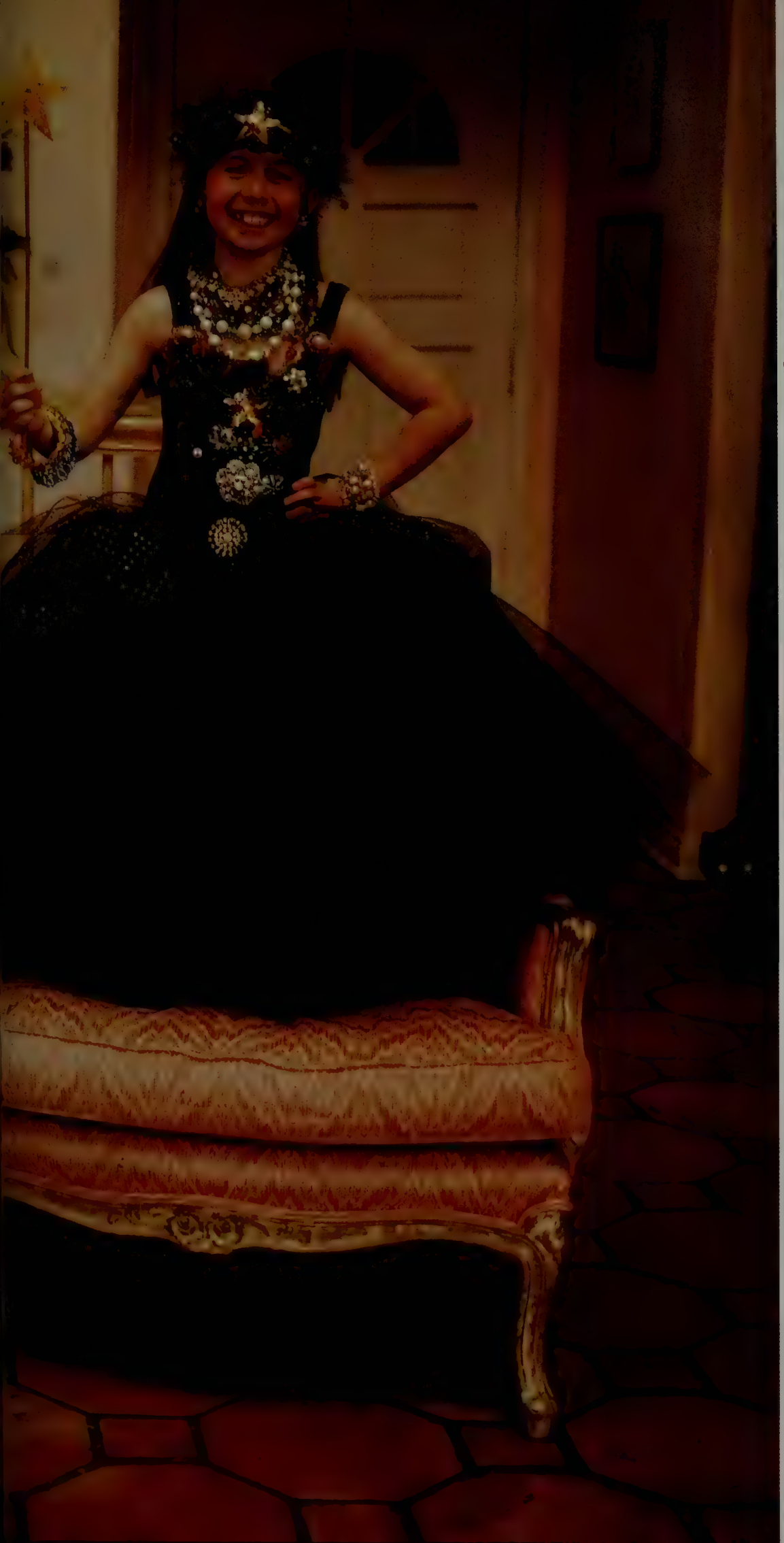
--Ben Bradlee to Bob Woodward

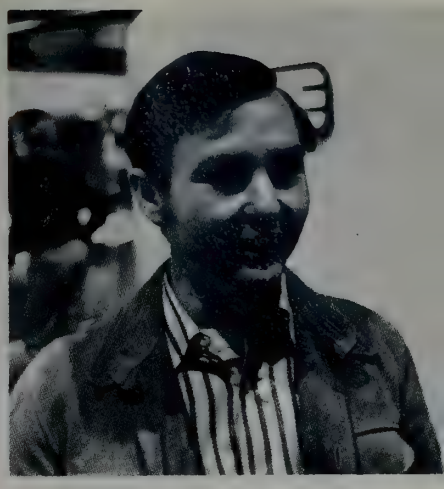
Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward

Bob Woodward, a former navy lieutenant who voted for Nixon in 1968, had been on *The Washington Post*'s metro staff for nine months when city editor Barry Sussman put him on the story of a break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters. Woodward, then twenty-nine, teamed up with twenty-eight-year-old Carl Bernstein, a newspaperman from the age of sixteen, who had been at the *Post* for six years. With the help of Woodward's controversial source, Deep Throat, "Woodstein" filed 227 stories on Watergate. Virtually alone in unveiling the scandal until the 1972 election, they won the *Post* a Pulitzer Prize for their coverage. Together they wrote *All the Presidents Men* and *The Final Days*.

Woodward, now the *Post*'s assistant managing editor for investigative reporting, has written controversial best-sellers [illegible] author of *The Man Who Would Be President* about Dan Quayle. Bernstein [illegible] ABC News and *Time*. He recently published a memoir of his parents' lives as Communists, and is now [illegible] journalism.







"What I did was mostly nickel-and-dime stuff. Maybe fifteen cents or a quarter every once in a while."

Donald H. Segretti

Donald Segretti—whose name means "secrets" in Italian—was an alumnus of the U.S.C. Republican Mafia and a practitioner of the dirty-tricks campaign tactics known as "rat fucking." Hired by Dwight Chapin, Nixon's appointments secretary, Segretti crisscrossed the country recruiting political saboteurs to infiltrate and undermine Democratic primaries and the Democratic convention in Miami. His capers included mailing out letters—on Citizens for Muskie stationery—falsely alleging that Democratic candidate Scoop Jackson had fathered an illegitimate child with a seventeen-year-old girl and that Hubert Humphrey had been arrested for drunken driving.

Segretti served five months for distributing false campaign materials and was briefly suspended from the California bar. He now lives in Newport Beach, California, where he runs his own firm specializing in business and bankruptcy law.

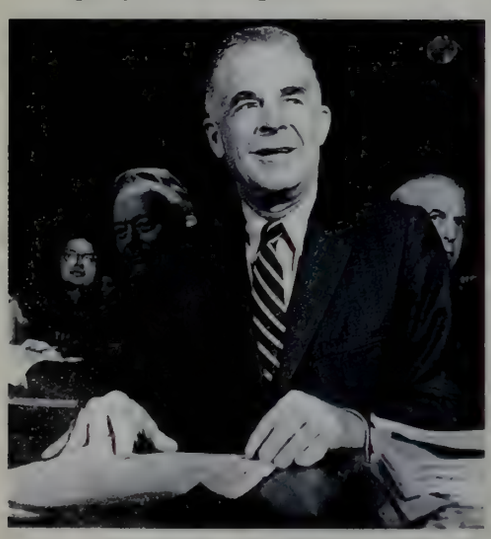
"I will not shield anybody and I do not intend to be intimidated by anybody."



Archibald Cox

In May 1973, Archibald Cox was appointed by a former student, Attorney General Elliot Richardson, to serve as special Watergate prosecutor. Cox vowed that if necessary he would pursue his investigation into the Oval Office. Five months later, when he refused to back down from a subpoena on the nine Oval Office tapes or to limit the scope of his investigation, Cox was fired by Acting Attorney General Robert Bork on the orders of the president in the "Saturday Night Massacre" of October 20, 1973, which resulted in the heaviest telegram traffic in the history of Western Union and set off the congressional move for impeachment.

Cox, who recently retired after forty-five years on the Harvard law faculty, still teaches at Boston University and at the University of Colorado in Boulder. This spring he stepped down after twelve years as chairman of Common Cause, a citizens' lobbying group for better government. □





How Nixon Came In from the Cold

It wasn't good-bye but *au revoir* after all. With vintage Nixonian audacity, the disgraced former president has completed his political rehabilitation just in time for the twentieth anniversary of Watergate. MICHAEL R. BESCHLOSS reveals how Richard Nixon began maneuvering just weeks after his resignation to arrive at this moment, when George Bush publicly hails him as "one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century"

On an icy day in February, sitting by a gas fireplace in his yellow New Jersey dining room, Richard Milhous Nixon is poised for the best month of his life since his landslide re-election in November 1972. Two weeks hence, he will send out a five-page memo to dozens of Washington opinion-makers complaining that the Bush administration's aid to Boris Yeltsin's Russia is "pathetically inadequate." Carefully leaked to major news media, this document will restore him to the center of the national foreign-policy stage. Despite the direct attack on his leadership, George Bush will become the first president since Watergate to appear with Nixon on a Washington dais, hailing him as "one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century."

Today, Nixon is just back from a few days' rest at the sunny 18,000-acre estate near Manzanillo, Mexico, of his friend the British financier Sir James Goldsmith, who had the former president flown down on one of his private planes. Nixon's face is lean and pink, the liquid brown eyes preternaturally clear and alert. He looks a decade younger than his age. His voice is thicker and raspier than during his heyday. When he peers down, a ray of sunlight falls across the crown of his head. His hair appears finer and straighter, almost silver-blue.

A smiling German woman from the Harz Mountains serves an elegant French luncheon and white-chocolate dessert. When his visitor does not eat with sufficient relish, Nixon gibes, "Obviously you don't like the food. O.K., we can send out to McDonald's!" A subtle Bordeaux is served, but Nixon does not indulge his well-trained palate. He explains that two years ago in Miami he suffered a heart disturbance. His doctor told him that wine would shorten his life, so he gave away most of his large and excellent cellar to family and friends.

Nixon soon turns to more worldly subjects, speaking first about George Bush. He notes that Bush, like most presidents, is not prone to asking outsiders for serious advice:

ROGER SANDLER



F
COMEB

Since his dre
reigning as an
philosopher
was shatter
Watergate, Nixo
painstak
restored his i

Nixon lambasted Bush
"I don't understand

"He likes to run his own show." The former president says that "Bush calls me on birthday and wedding anniversaries. I get those nice, handwritten notes. It's hard to see how he finds the time for anything else!"

His history with Bush is mixed. In August 1974, on the day after Nixon's final Cabinet meeting, Bush, then Republican national chairman, wrote him of his "considered judgment that you should resign." During Bush's vice presidency, Nixon privately lambasted him for "weakness." He recalled that Bush's father, Senator Prescott Bush of Connecticut, had been "ramrod-erect" and "tough as nails": "I don't understand what happened to George."

Now whatever differences they have are gentlemanly: "Bush, far more than I, believes in the effectiveness of personal diplomacy. He believes that if you have a good personal relationship, it helps on substance. I believe that unless leaders' interests are compatible, a personal relationship doesn't mean anything."

Nixon says that Ronald Reagan was similar: "I remember watching Reagan and Gorbachev on television in Red Square—the body language. Reagan put his arm on Gorbachev's shoulder. Gorbachev was not comfortable with that kind of thing. Neither was I. Eisenhower was the same way."

Nixon was frustrated by Bush's slowness to abandon Gorbachev for Boris Yeltsin: "Being the gentleman that he is, he does not like to throw over his old friends." Darting to another subject, he doubts that the president will get much benefit in the 1992 election for his victory over Iraq: "Whatever publisher paid General Schwarzkopf all that money is going to lose it. Americans have forgotten all about the Gulf War."

He is appalled that, in 1992, voters seem to believe that foreign policy no longer matters: "People are saying, 'Why spend $5 billion on Russia when we've got to put a new cesspool in Winnetka?' " Tapping the table for emphasis, Nixon warns that without help "democracy could fail in Russia." He says, "I don't think Boris Yeltsin is the Second Coming. As Churchill said in *Great Contemporaries,* 'He burns all of his candles at both ends.' He's compulsive. I give him only slightly more than a 50 percent chance to succeed. But he's got guts."

A year and a half ago, Nixon sold his modern, fifteen-room house in Saddle River, New Jersey, for $2.4 million (to a Japanese businessman, inevitably) and purchased the end unit of a modest row of gray mock-Tudor town houses in a new, nearby housing development. Separated from an industrial site by a fringe of trees, the three-bedroom home is the smallest space in which Richard and Pat Nixon have lived for more than forty years—no minor consideration for a seventy-nine-year-old man and an eighty-year-old woman of uncertain health.

Eighteen years after resigning to avoid impeachment and removal from office, the thirty-seventh president of the United States rises while it is still dark, dons a suit and tie, and strolls for two miles. A neighbor's Shih Tzu often runs out to greet him. Nixon says that some of his best lines come to him while walking alone.

He spends much of the day in the loft-library his wife designed for him. Sitting near a large globe, he telephones around the world. The irregular-shaped room is floodlit by skylights punched in the vaulted ceiling. Its walls are encased in custom-made nut-brown cabinetry—shelf after shelf of books. Nixon's library is heavy on Winston Churchill and Abraham Lincoln (not only Sandburg's heroic life but Vidal's acerbic novel). It includes the *Public Papers* of U.S. presidents through August 1974, as well as Paul Johnson's *Modern Times,* which Nixon admires extravagantly. A life of Pepys and David McCullough's *Brave Companions* were sent to him recently by New York senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who as a Nixon White House aide had once famously prodded his boss to read a life of Disraeli.

When he writes, he sits down at a French Provincial writing table that resembles Charles de Gaulle's, adorned by a statuette of miniature elephants on parade, trunk-to-tail. He slips on a pair of black-rimmed reading glasses with a piece of transparent tape wrapped around the left temple.

Every weekday, Nixon is driven to his suite in a nearby Italianate office building that exhibits a copy of Michelangelo's *David* in the lobby and whose major tenant is a travel agency.

Nixon's almost donnish existence is easily the most tranquil period of his life, the embodiment of his grandmother's Quaker term "peace at the center." It is very different from the commanding place in American politics and society that he once envisioned for himself.

In January 1973, the re-elected president sat down at the writing table in his home office at Key Biscayne and scrawled on a legal pad, "Goals for 2d term." He planned to root Kennedy-Johnson holdovers and other potential disloyalists out of the federal bureaucracy and permanently transform the structure of the Cabinet departments.

He would position John B. Connally, L.B.J. intimate, former Democratic governor of Texas, and his own surprise first-term secretary of the Treasury, to be the thirty-eighth president of the United States. After Connally announced his jump to the Republicans, Nixon hoped, he would be followed by millions of other Tory Democrats estranged from the party of George McGovern, ultimately making the Republicans the majority party. Inaugurated in 1977, President Connally would owe his predecessor more than any other president of the century. From La Casa Pacifica, Nixon's cliffside "Western White House" in San Clemente, the former president would serve as a kind of philosopher-king.

Nixon's institutional radicalism did not end with politics. On the legal pad, he also scrawled, "New Establishment—Press—Intellectuals—Business—Social—Arts." He planned

for "weakness": what happened to George."

to use his network of wealthy allies and friendly foundations to write his own version of *Debrett's Peerage*—a new power structure to supplant the "fashionable negativism" of the northeastern, Kennedy-oriented establishment that had "paralyzed" the nation with "self-doubt and second thoughts."

That same January, Nixon's domestic counselor John Ehrlichman advised a trustee of the Nixon Foundation—conceived as the engine room of Nixon's post-presidential life—that when Nixon retired he did not intend to be a lawyer, executive, or depend on money from book advances under strict deadlines. Instead, the president planned to rent his papers and memorabilia to the Nixon Foundation for $200,000 a year, the equivalent of his White House salary.

All of these dreams were shattered within two months. The same spring he had planned to spend grooming Connally, Nixon instead immersed himself in the Watergate defense. When Connally changed parties, few noticed.

In August 1974, Nixon was exiled to San Clemente. Two weeks before, Connally had been indicted for perjury, obstructing justice, and accepting bribes. (He was acquitted.) Republicans were thunderously defeated in the 1974 congressional elections. Their elders resolved that Nixon not be mentioned at their 1976 convention. The Nixon Foundation was disbanded.

Several days later, someone tossed a firebomb into Pat Nixon's childhood home in Cerritos, California. When the former First Lady ventured out of La Casa Pacifica, someone spat on her. Visitors to Madame Tussaud's in London voted Nixon the most "hated and feared" figure in the waxworks.

Richard Nixon resolutely denies that since Watergate he has engaged in any kind of "deliberate" effort to regain full membership in the American political family. But in private his advisers speak of his campaign for a "final comeback." They note that within a fortnight of leaving the White House, Nixon was already asking friends for advice on restoring his public stature. They suggested that any return to favor would rest on public recognition of his foreign-policy skills, conveyed through books, articles, speeches, and confidential advice to those in power.

The first step was a flight to Beijing in February 1976 for the fourth anniversary of his fabled rapprochement with China. Arriving three days before the New Hampshire presidential primary, the beaming former president appeared on every U.S. front page and news program. Fighting with Ronald Reagan for his political life, President Gerald Ford was irate: Nixon's act would remind voters of the man who had chosen Ford for national office and been pardoned by him.

At the White House, shaking his head, Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller told his longtime adviser James M. Cannon, who was serving as Ford's domestic chief, "You know why he went? He's bringing back a shipment of gold for himself." Cannon, amazed, asked, "How do you know that?" Rockefeller said he had heard it from an eminent New York banker.

Cannon immediately called a White House lawyer, Richard Parsons: "Hey, look, the vice president told me this. Should we tell somebody?" Parsons replied, "You're an officer of the U.S. government. You know what the answer to that question is." Cannon confided the rumor to Ford's White House counsel, Philip Buchen, a polio victim. By Cannon's account, Buchen "almost came up out of his chair." Without involving the president, Buchen asked U.S. Customs and the Secret Service to investigate the allegation. (No evidence of wrongdoing was found.)

Dogged by this kind of rumor for years, Nixon as ex-president has striven to demonstrate himself cleaner than Caesar's wife. When he makes a speech, he accepts no honorarium and often pays all expenses for himself and his entourage. He has refused dozens of lucrative corporate jobs. Chatting with a former Jimmy Carter aide, Nixon praised Carter's decision not to sit on corporate boards—"unlike Jerry Ford." He went on to say he had been told by an industrialist who had generously supported Ford that the man had encountered Ford on a golf course and asked him to stop by his villa and meet his managers. By Nixon's account, Ford had agreed, but only if paid in advance.

In the 1980s, in the spirit of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, Nixon reduced the federal salaries of his staff by 5 percent and made up the difference from his own pocket. In 1985, he announced that he was giving up his Secret Service detail to save the U.S. government $3 million a year.

Nixon's critics have suggested that these public-minded gestures, not to mention the large legal expense of fighting the U.S. government to keep certain of his papers closed, could not be sustained by his real-estate investments, government pensions, and book advances.

Court documents reveal that Nixon wrote letters in the mid-1980s to Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania on behalf of his former military aide Colonel Jack Brennan and his onetime attorney general John Mitchell, who were involved in Global Research International, a company that sold military supplies and helicopters to foreign governments. When Global Research wished to sell $181 million worth of Romanian-made uniforms to Iraq, Nixon wrote Ceausescu, "I can assure you that Colonel Brennan and former Attorney General John Mitchell will be responsible and constructive in working on this project with your representatives." In another letter, Nixon wrote the dictator, "I wanted to let you know how highly Mr. Mitchell spoke of the diligence of the Romanian workers."

It would have been in character for Nixon to do a good turn for two men who had gone through fire for him during Watergate and beyond. There is no evidence that Nixon personally benefited from these transactions, and it is unlikely

Nixon orchestrated
with the precision of a

he would have risked jeopardizing his careful efforts for rehabilitation with an act of international financial legerdemain that could easily become public.

After Nixon's 1962 defeat for governor of California, he moved to New York, enabling him to polish his reputation among national opinion-makers. In February 1980, he did the same thing: he moved to an East Sixty-fifth Street brownstone and shifted his campaign for vindication into high gear.

He had spoken to a Reagan operative, Edward Rollins, about becoming his *chef de cabinet,* but finally advised him, "Reagan's going to win the presidency. If I were you, I'd want to go make history, not just relive it." After the 1980 election, Nixon consulted his friend Roger Stone, Reagan's young, hard-driving campaign manager in the Northeast. (At nineteen, Stone had worked for Nixon's Committee to Re-elect the President, CREEP, and Nixon donated $100 to Stone's victorious 1977 campaign for national Young Republican chairman.) Stone lobbied Nixon to "build relationships with reporters." This was not the most welcome advice to the man who agreed with Paul Johnson's description of Watergate as a "media putsch." Stone promised to reach out "very selectively" for "unbiased" younger journalists who had not covered Nixon during Watergate and who would be fascinated to meet the former president. He would focus on those who seemed to have especially promising futures.

Nixon was willing to dine with journalists, but he would not crawl. During a vacation at La Samana on St. Martin, Nixon was dismayed to see his old Watergate nemesis Benjamin Bradlee of *The Washington Post,* there on vacation with his wife, Sally Quinn. Whimsically, Bradlee got it into his head that Nixon might be ready to "tell all"—and tell it to him. Several times, when he espied the former president strolling down the beach, he rushed out to see him. But Nixon dove into the water and swam in a great half-circle until he had safely circumnavigated Bradlee.

Morton Kondracke of *The New Republic,* Strobe Talbott and Roger Rosenblatt of *Time,* Sara Fritz of the *Los Angeles Times,* Gerald Boyd of *The New York Times,* and dozens of others were invited for luncheons and dinners at Nixon's New York town house or, when he moved in 1981, the house in Saddle River. When guests flew in from Washington, Nixon orchestrated the event with the precision of a campaign rally—drinks in the living room, dinner in the dining room, liqueurs and coffee in the sun-room, all in time for the guests to make the last shuttle out of LaGuardia. Nixon jovially referred to the sessions as "séances."

His wife was never present. Sequestered in another part of the house or off visiting her grandchildren, Pat Nixon had long since said good-bye to all that. When she resisted sitting for a White House portrait in the late 1970s, her daughter Julie urged her not to give her father's foes "a victory by default." She replied, "Why not? They won, didn't they?"

Before the guests arrived, the former president studied their backgrounds so that he could drop personal references into the conversation. ("You may not remember this since you were born in 1949 but . . .") Many were surprised by the private charm, alert intelligence, worldliness, and stiletto wit so obscured by Nixon's public caricature. They were intrigued by proximity to the political figure who, more than any other, had presided over their lives. One visitor was struck by the sheer will with which Nixon had overcome his innate bashfulness—first to rise to the top of an extrovert's profession and now to entertain his old enemies, the press: "His eyes fluttered and his face tightened at the slightest interruption, the slightest back talk. There was something so obviously rehearsed, calculating, unspontaneous about the whole thing. We were being played like violins and we knew it."

During the meal, the former president spoke the throw-away lines that his friends always heard and his large audiences did not. On the Italians: "A lousy government but beautiful embassies." On the F.B.I.'s bedroom tapes of Martin Luther King: "L.B.J. and everyone else in Congress got to hear them. I didn't. It's discrimination!" On an Eastern European politician: "A very clever guy—strong and devious, all the things a political leader needs."

Women were underrepresented among Nixon's guests. They would have compelled him to dilute his attempt to be one of the guys. Nixon once said that his 1956 vice-presidential opponent, Senator Estes Kefauver, campaigned "with a Bible in one hand and his cock in the other." On the flagging New York Mets: "I'm pissed. Are you pissed?"

Nixon labored to identify with his visitors. He told two magazine journalists, "You're a couple of intellectuals. I won't try to prove I'm an intellectual." (One of the two recalls, "With this he semi-inadvertently reminded us of his defensiveness and resentment of the 'Harvards.' ") He commiserated with his fellow writers: "You see, I don't write easily. I'm not a natural writer." He spoke of the "agony of creation."

Occasionally he struck younger guests as someone from another place and time. When men mentioned their wives, he joked, "You still living with them?" When he carped about "the Georgetown salons" and "the Georgetown set," his listeners politely refrained from saying that many of the Kennedy Democrats to whom he referred had moved away, were dead, or at least were no longer a "set."

Visitors were enchanted with his detailed, tough-minded understanding of the American political scene, although as a seer he did not always bat a thousand. In early 1984, he predicted that the Democratic ticket would be Walter Mondale and Gary Hart and that it would run Reagan and Bush a "close race." Through much of the 1980s, Nixon insisted that Democrats should nominate Mario Cuomo. He "didn't buy the stuff" that Cuomo "looks Italian": "This fellow is

dinners with journalists campaign rally.

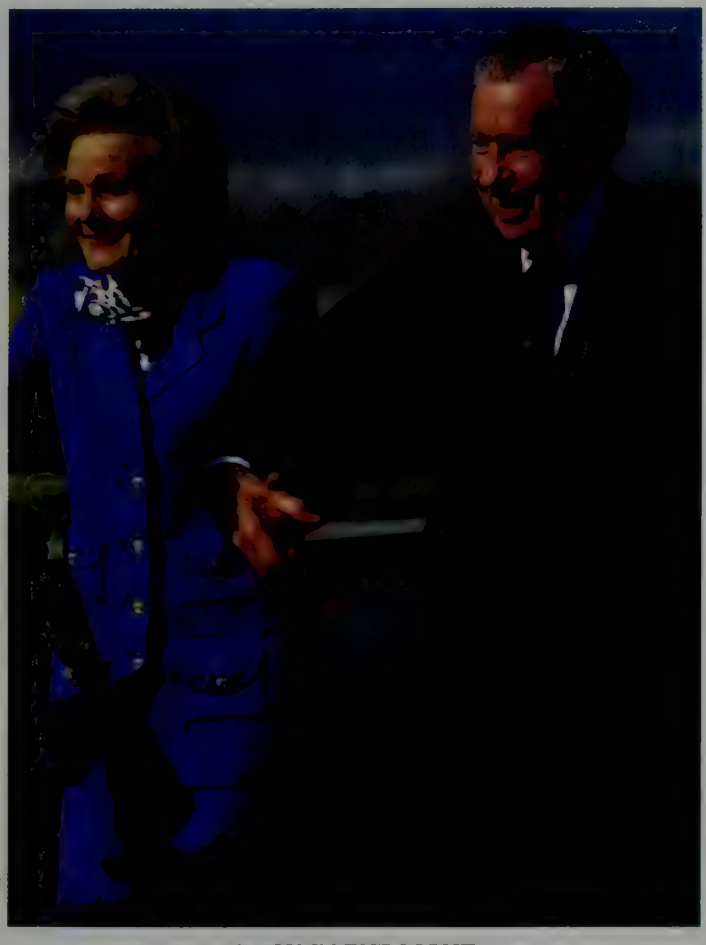
great in debate. He makes good speeches. . . . The Democrats have lost the South. . . . They've got to go for New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Connecticut. They've got to go for Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, and California. That and a couple of other odds and ends, and they've got it made.''

Nixon also kept up his contacts with older journalists. He once told *Washington Times* editor Arnaud de Borchgrave that he had advised President Reagan to nominate de Borchgrave as C.I.A. director. When Nixon published a book, his old aide and speechwriter Patrick J. Buchanan interviewed him on CNN.

It is difficult to find an instance in which a reporter pulled a punch as a result of dining with Nixon, but the séances doubtless caused the press to take Nixon's views on current issues more seriously than had he remained incommunicado in San Clemente. They helped Nixon the contemporary figure to supplant what Nixon himself referred to as ''the Watergate man.''

The former president was not loath to use the stick as well as the carrot. Nixon's old White House lawyer and friend Richard Moore once gave him what Nixon considered the best advice he'd ever received about the press: ''Go after the little lies.'' No ''unfair shot'' should go unnoticed.

Thus when the Boston public-television station WGBH asked for help on a Nixon documentary, his staff replied that the day public television treated the former president fairly would be the day that ''pigs will fly.'' When Hugh Sidey wrote in *Time* of a pair of martini glasses in a photograph of Nixon taken the day before his resignation, a denial flew back.



BACK IN THE LIGHT
Pat and Richard Nixon at the opening of the Reagan Library in November of 1991.

In 1989, ABC announced its intention to air a docudrama, sponsored by AT&T, based on *The Final Days*, the best-selling 1976 exposé of Nixon's last year in office by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, which, among other things, depicted a lifeless Nixon marriage. Nixon considered this a matter of personal honor: just after reading it, Pat Nixon suffered her first stroke. A Nixon aide wrote the AT&T chairman, Robert E. Allen, ''Perhaps you should change your corporate slogan to 'Reach Out and Smear Someone.' '' Nixon changed his long-distance service to MCI.

A Nixon lawyer wrote ABC that the film was an ''infringement of his right to use his name and image to promote his own writings and statements about foreign policy and other issues facing our nation and the world.'' ABC News was informed that Nixon would no longer accede to its interview requests. One of its producers called Nixon's staff to argue that *The Final Days* had been presented by ABC's entertainment division, not News, but to no avail. (Nixon reversed his decision in January 1992, when he was promoting his ninth book, *Seize the Moment*, and agreed to be interviewed on *Nightline* by Ted Koppel.)

Nixon knew the value of good relations with a sitting president. He recalled that after Franklin Roosevelt's death Harry Truman had invited Herbert Hoover to the Oval Office for his first visit since 1933. Afterward, Hoover groused that maybe now those who had smeared him for twelve years as the villain of the ''Hoover Depression'' would feel somewhat cowed.

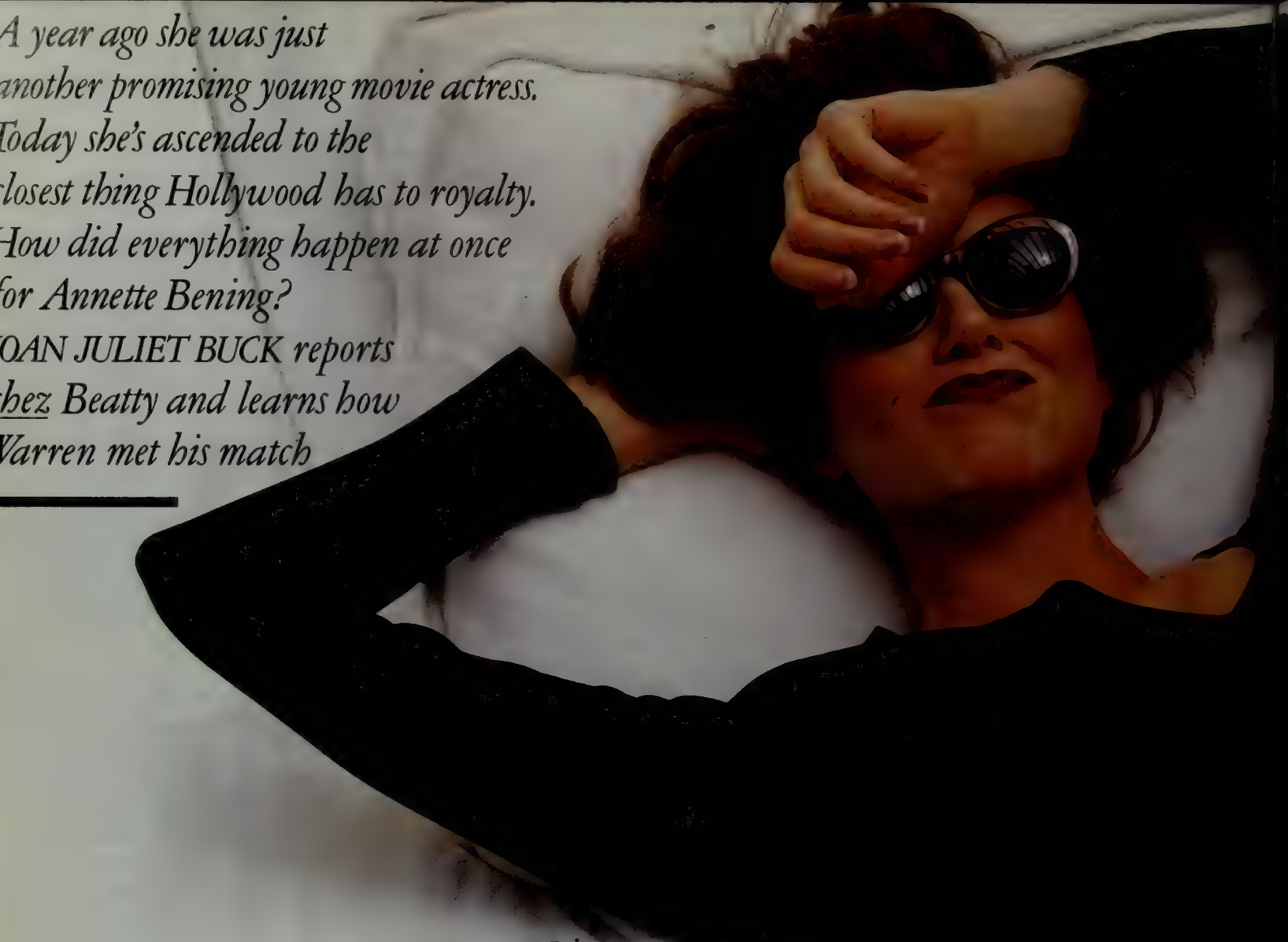
Even after leaving the White House, Ford kept his distance from Nixon, desiring to avoid the appearance of collusion behind the Nixon pardon. Nixon's relations with Jimmy Carter were glacial. In 1979, Carter invited him to a White House dinner for the Chinese vice-premier, Deng Xiaoping. But, Carter was informed, Nixon was privately contemptuous of Carter's country affectations and his ''softness'' in dealing with the Soviet Union, Iran, and Nicaragua.

During the 1980 campaign, Nixon sent secret memos on strategy and tactics to Rollins and Stone, quizzing them about power shifts within the Reagan caravan: ''What's your read on this guy?'' After Reagan's election, Nixon did not jeopardize his new access to the Oval Office by appearing at the inauguration or asking for a formal job. He knew that even if Reagan gave him no public role those who had plagued him for six years might now feel somewhat cowed.

He praised Reagan publicly, *(Continued on page 148)*

ROGER SANDLER

A year ago she was just another promising young movie actress. Today she's ascended to the closest thing Hollywood has to royalty. How did everything happen at once for Annette Bening?
JOAN JULIET BUCK reports chez Beatty and learns how Warren met his match



The Annette Effect

Photographs by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

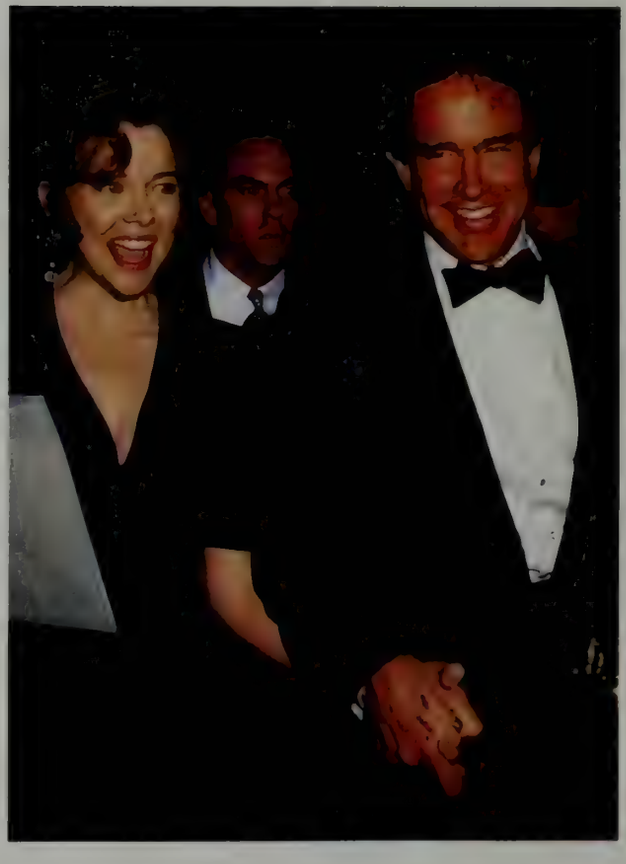


"The trick is knowing what's important and what's not," says Bening. "What to sweat and what to let go."

Annette Bening exhibits, under all public circumstances, a character free of neuroses, anxiety, or the usual insecurities. She exudes calm, curiosity, and stability; expresses a consideration for the pain and egos of others by means of a measured politeness. There is little she seems to want to make claim to in matters of taste or belief; she is neither contentious nor egotistical, and admits that when uncomfortable she tends to get very calm. The combination of these qualities presents a fairly glassy surface, which some have seen as distance. In her anonymous days as an acting student, they struck people as formidably mature. "So many young people force themselves on you through their personality—she was just good at what she did," says Art Noll, who taught her at San Diego Mesa College. "She doesn't spill her guts all over you," says Mike Nichols, who directed her thirteen years later in *Regarding Henry*. "I don't think you have to reveal all your pain in order to work," Bening says, "but you have to learn not to pretend."

Now that she is married to Warren Beatty, whose very presence stands for success, stardom, and the enduring existence of Hollywood itself, these qualities can easily be seen as the attributes of a member of a royal family, or a cool First Lady. Or simply the careful husbandry of a working actress whose particular skill is economy of means. Sydney Walker, who worked with her at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco, praises her talent for "controlling what she's going to reveal of the character, as she controls your estimate of the character, and your perception of *her* as the character. It's not as ugly as manipulation, but it's part of the actor's inventiveness: the play, the project, is the thing—she's doing it in the name of the clarity of the final result." Ron Guttman, who played one of her lovers in Tina Howe's *Coastal Disturbances*, situates the technique as "that old Stanislavsky thing—if you have 50 percent, show 30 percent. If you have 30 percent, show 20 percent, and if you only have 10 percent of the part, it's better not to do anything."

The Bening-Beatty union is a marriage of complements. Her stalwart virtues combine with his mercurial traits—judicious intellect, relentless charm, and a compulsion to manipulate situations and control outcomes—to make them a seamless couple. Their pre-Oscar promotional tour for *Bugsy* moved across six countries, from Japan to Italy, England, Spain, France, and Germany, with confounding speed. Having fielded the inevitable question about whether or not they would get married with a joint statement of regal



opacity—"We are in complete agreement on that subject"—they then announced their marriage on March 12 (the same day Academy members received their Oscar ballots), without specifying when, exactly, they had been married.

Beatty had initiated the *Bugsy* project eight years ago, and was the producer as well as the star. He expended extraordinary energy in promoting it. Despite ten nominations, though none for Annette, the film won only two Oscars, for costume design and art direction.

The day after the disappointing results of the Oscars, Annette Bening said, "Oh, well, *c'est la vie*." She's good at *la vie*. As Warren Beatty had said about her, "She has the strongest commitment to the creation of life in a play, and yet you never have the slightest doubt with her that real life is her first priority."

"She can be a wonderful friend at dinner," says director Miloš Forman, "but you'd never feel it's that kind of monster talent. She's not selling herself when it doesn't matter; when it's not important, she doesn't use all of her powers." "She doesn't project that 'Look at me' that actors do," says playwright Tina Howe. "She's not counting the house."

Two years ago, Annette Bening was someone who had been attracting attention for her exceptional performances on-screen, less so in Miloš Forman's *Valmont*, where she was a young, dimpled, perpetually smiling version of the wicked Marquise de Merteuil, than in Stephen Frears's *The Grifters*, where she was, as Pauline Kael put it, "a stunning actress and superb wiggler" as the bubbly, spiky-haired, light-fingered con artist Myra Langtry. "It was clear to anyone that this was the most formidable young actress in movies," says Beatty, "and I had had a sneaking suspicion a long time before I saw her, because of things I'd heard about her. You learn to pick things up, like a drumbeat—someone has a tone in their voice when they speak about somebody. Real talent and real intelligence and wit will be recognized by certain people."

He had his first meeting with her in a pizza parlor in a canyon shopping mall to talk about the part of Virginia Hill in *Bugsy*. "I was looking for someone to make me good. When I met her, I felt relief," he says in a chic Milanese tearoom on Madison Avenue. "She has a higher capacity to explore and deal with a broad range of issues than other people. She's unpredictable in the best sense, and at the same time consistent. She inspires feelings of trust in people who know her. She has the capacity to understand in ways that usually come from people having gone through hell, and at the same time she's able to radiate a feeling of happiness and well-being that makes a set better off when she's on it.

"She has energy, intelligence, articulation, the *(Continued on page 154)*

ALBERT ORTEGA



"I was looking for someone to make me good," says Beatty. "When I met her, I felt relief."

"She has the best voice in the world, the best body, the best face," says Warren Beatty. *Opposite*, the Beattys at the Directors Guild Awards in March.

DRESS BY BILL BLASS, LTD.; EARRINGS BY SAINT WATERMAN

Wenner's



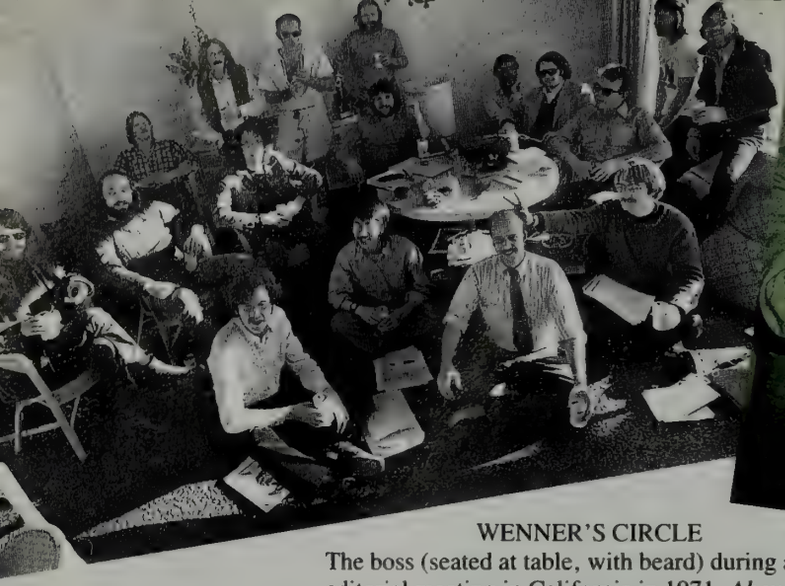
This month Jann Wenner celebrates twenty-five years since he revolutionized journalism with *Rolling Stone*, but as STEPHEN SCHIFF reports, the bad-boy editor is his own most successful creation. While Wenner imbibed the *Zeitgeist* on his way to the wealth and celebrity he now basks in, he also finally found a place he belongs

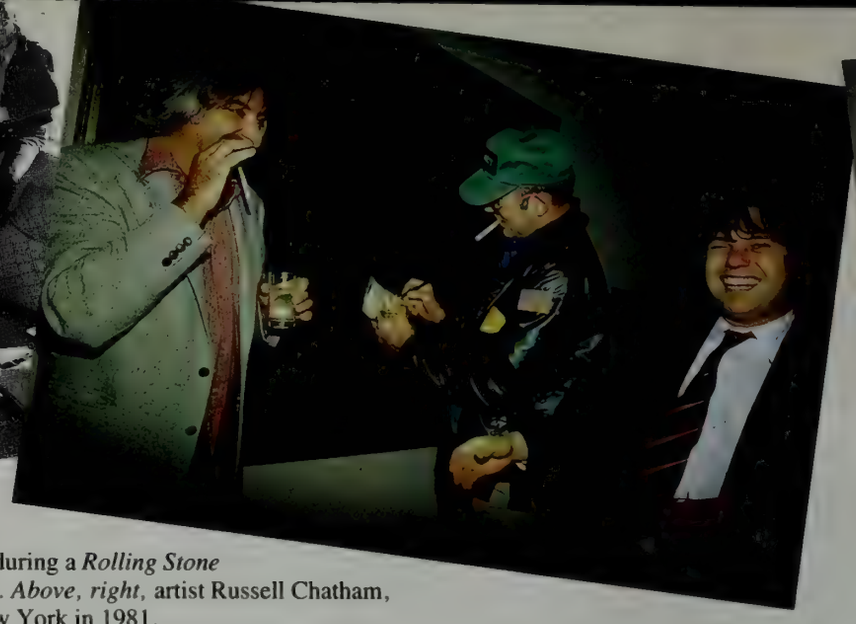
Photographs by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ

Streak



THE BEAT GOES ON Wenner in *Rolling Stone*'s New York offices. *Inset*, his new baby, *Men's Journal*, joins *US* and *Rolling Stone* with its May-June issue.





WENNER'S CIRCLE
The boss (seated at table, with beard) during a *Rolling Stone* editorial meeting in California in 1971. *Above, right,* artist Russell Chatham, Hunter Thompson, and Wenner in New York in 1981.

When the architects at Phillips Janson designed the huge, icy-sleek new offices of *Rolling Stone,* they imagined the place as a city. They threw the production staff into what they called "the warehouse district." They created an airy, art-filled "promenade" overlooking what they called "the river of commerce"—midtown Manhattan's Sixth Avenue. And for the editor and publisher, Jann Wenner, they planned an enormous corner office. Which they called "the Prince's Palace." When they told Wenner its nickname, says the architect James Phillips, "it brought a wry smile to his face."

As well it might. The Palace isn't flashy, but it radiates masculinity, dignity, power. Sitting here, surrounded by heavy marble and dark African wood, one finds it hard to remember that Prince Jann built his dominion amid the muck and rumble of rock 'n' roll—that his first Palace was a dusty storage loft above a San Francisco printing press, that his early employees were hippies and sometimes drug dealers, that the premiere issue of *Rolling Stone* was twenty-four pages, cost a quarter, and was written largely by Wenner himself, who, in those days, was not above starting an article with the words "Tina Turner is an incredible chick."

That was exactly a quarter-century ago. Nowadays, Jann Wenner doesn't write. He doesn't even edit much. The Prince has become a somewhat distant king, his nation now run by his hand-picked ministers—the editors of *Rolling Stone,* of the eternally struggling (and improving) entertainment monthly *US,* and of the brand-new *Men's Journal,* a handsome special-interest quarterly about things like kayaking and "attack tennis" and which watch to wear when you're scaling K2. A typical day in Wenner's office will include a few meetings about the magazines, but mostly it will find him planning vacations, sorting through photos from the vacations, and taking calls from assorted minor celebrities, many of whom will eventually join him on the vacations.

Still, no visitor to the Palace could ever doubt who rules.

At forty-six, Jann (pronounced "Yahn") Wenner is no longer the pale pudgeball who always seemed so out of place clunking into tony restaurants on the heels of the superstars he'd befriended. Hints of a belly remain beneath his bespoke Spanish suit, but they are only hints. Wenner has never looked slimmer or tanner or more glamorous, and even though he still squirms in his English club chair like a toddler getting a haircut, he could easily pass for some bejeweled Italian noble who has just inherited the family firm. His watch is a Cartier (he'll wear a Rolex tomorrow); his voguishly sparse, graying beard is like something out of a George Michael video; his hair does a bouncy spaniel flop over his forehead. Today is an unusual day in his kingdom, for Wenner is doing what he does best: inventing a new magazine. *Men's Journal* is being prepared for takeoff after more than two years of planning and preparation, and Wenner wants his top editorial people around him for a near-final going-over.

"The why of *Men's Journal,*" he tells me, "is that it was just something that interested me, which was sort of the outdoors and sports and being healthy. This is an area I'm in love with." He has been for a long time. In 1977, he launched a similar magazine, *Outside,* which he sold just two years later to shore up his sagging war chest, only to watch it become an enormous success for its buyer, the Chicago publisher Larry Burke. But Wenner took his revenge: he spirited away John Rasmus, the editor credited with making *Outside* a winner, and made him the editor of *Men's Journal.*

In a moment, Rasmus and the rest of Wenner's cabinet will troop into the office, but first Wenner is meeting with his prime minister, Bob Wallace, *Rolling Stone*'s executive editor and the man who is probably most responsible for the magazine's return to prominence after the doldrums of the early eighties. Wallace is a little miffed at his liege. "Have you read it yet?" he asks.

"Read what?" asks Wenner.

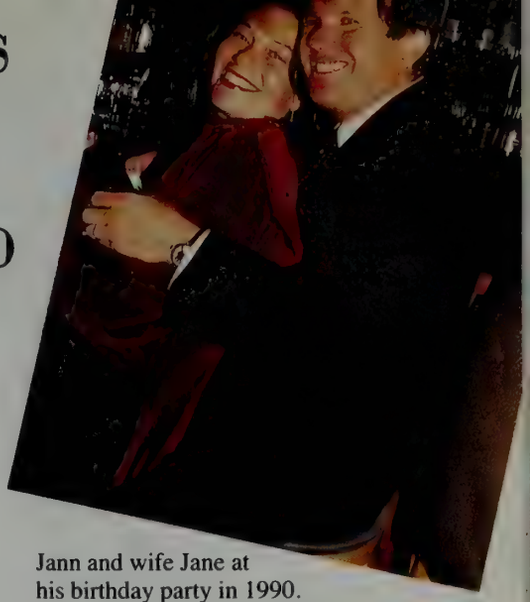
"The AIDS piece." *Rolling Stone* has published an article speculating that the H.I.V. epidemic may be the result of animal viruses entering the human population during research on such medicines as the Salk and Sabin polio vaccines. "You gotta read it," Wallace chides.

"Yeah, I know. I'll read it," says Wenner. "I'm going to Aspen tomorrow; I'll take it on the plane." He's talking about his own plane—a $5.6 million Gulfstream G-II, which seats thirteen, not counting the crew. Wenner reaches for the plate of crudités in front of him and grabs a celery stalk. There is always food at hand in his office, and when he's not munching celery or car-



Above, from left, Jackson Browne, Wenner, Richard Gere, and Fran Lebowitz at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame party in 1990.

"One of the things about Jann is that he needs to see his effect on other people all the time."



Jann and wife Jane at his birthday party in 1990.

rots or popcorn, he's munching his fingernails—and when he's not munching them, he's smoking a cigarette. "Want a radish or something?" he asks. "A cappuccino?" Wallace and I shake our heads. "O.K.," says Wenner, crunching vehemently, "I got a couple of things. First, that Willie Dixon obit. I think we gave Willie Dixon short shrift. Can we do something about that?"

Wallace looks down at his notepad, nodding—it's an easy demand to comply with. True, the blues musician Willie Dixon was far more influential in the sixties than in the nineties, but who could argue that his passing didn't deserve more than the smallish box *Rolling Stone* had granted it? Besides, it's good to see Wenner reading the magazine so carefully. Anything else? "Yeah," says Wenner, throwing a leg rakishly over the arm of his chair. "Yeah, I would like to do one-page profiles of James Taylor, Jimmy Buffett..." I can almost see Wallace suppressing a roll of his eyes. These are the same old tired names, the superannuated singer-songwriter types whom Wenner has always loved—and befriended. "Could we just start with James Taylor?" he says.

Wallace is silent, peering down at his notepad.

"He's still touring. Still has a lot of fans."

"We don't have the space," Wallace says quietly.

"Could you just do it?" says Wenner, and now his peppery voice has an edge.

Bob Wallace is smart, funny, and also amazingly tranquil for someone who has run *Rolling Stone* under Wenner's sovereignty for a record eight years. He might be said to represent the new breed of Wennerites, many of whom are now filtering into the Palace for the *Men's Journal* colloquy. Practically to a man, they are calm, quiet, blue-eyed sons of the American heartland. They hail from Mississippi, Arizona, Illinois, and New Mexico; they are encouraged to wear ties in the office, and they do. They don't party with celebrities, they don't socialize with Jann Wenner, they don't drink at lunch, and they have a distinctly responsible, noncompetitive air. They are nice guys, steady guys, guys who are willing to let Jann Wenner be the superstar—guys who are slow to rile.

Sitting among them as Wenner pores over the dummy version of what will eventually be *Men's Journal,* one can't help noting the room's peculiar atmosphere. The assembled staff hang on Wenner's pronouncements, but they rarely meet his eyes. He doesn't lord it over them, exactly, and yet as his edicts shower down, so do tiny barbs and arrows, intimidating reminders that the boyish figure across the desk isn't just another kid in the class—he's the boss, and he wants you to know it. What Wenner doesn't realize is that the barbs are needless. These men would respect their editor in chief without them, if only because they've seen what he can do with a magazine.

As Wenner holds the *Men's Journal* dummy in his hands, flipping the leaves and letting his eyes graze, it's as though there were some Platonic magazine dancing in his head; he seems to spot every discrepancy between what's on the page and what ought to be, and he babbles his findings to his staff as they nod and scribble on notepads.

"The type here? Too tiny and too precious," he says. "I'd like it bolder and more rugged. I've already said that I didn't like this color—it's too yellowy. I don't know what we need this picture down here for. It's tiny and it doesn't say much. Let's make the second contents page like a catalogue, like the L. L. Bean catalogue. Really use the space as if it's a catalogue you're ordering from. You need more text pages on the Cahill piece. God, we spent enough money on it, we may as well let it go. What's this word in the 'Desert Golf' piece? What's an 'ocotillo'?"

"A cactuslike plant that has green leaves on it," says Bob Wallace in a slightly stilted voice, as if he were reading from a dictionary.

"Oh," says Wenner. "O.K. Hey, I'm just thrilled with this. Great heads, great layout. Now, here I think the right thing to do is really go to the cliché—put in a picture of the *Men's Journal* staff. Unless you think it's just over the top. But there's been a group of people working on this thing for over a year, and I think we ought to see them."

There's a moment of silence—perhaps of resistance. Wenner senses it instantly. "That's what I want," he barks. "So do it. And if it doesn't work, we won't run it. But do it." He drums his fingers on the desk. "That's my critique. *Ça va?*"

He turns to Matthew Drace, the *Men's Journal* art director. "Are there feature spreads for the next issue to show me?"

"I been busy," says Drace, quietly, firmly.

Wenner's voice tightens. "Doing?"

"A lot of production stuff."

Wenner eases off. If he still seems too eager to assert and reassert his authority, life here is certainly not the way it was in the old days, when, according

to one ex-staffer, "there were people who would literally shake before editorial meetings, they were so nervous. They were all supposed to come in with story ideas, and certain people would be just quivering with fear. It wasn't an atmosphere conducive to creativity. It was an atmosphere conducive to nervous breakdowns."

The current atmosphere is more like a standoff. You put up with a little of Wenner's menace and you get a lot of his intuition. *Men's Journal,* for instance, will prove to be a remarkable product—one that, despite Wenner's odd timing (he's releasing it amid the worst slump the publishing industry has experienced in decades), looks smart enough and dashing enough to become one of the leading men's magazines of the nineties. As for Wenner's editorial abilities, his former employee the MTV News anchor Kurt Loder puts it this way: "He can just read a couple 'graphs and say, 'It's garbage,' and cross out stuff, and he's right about it—the stuff he crossed out is garbage. He's a great editor—when he's functioning well and not drinking vodka."

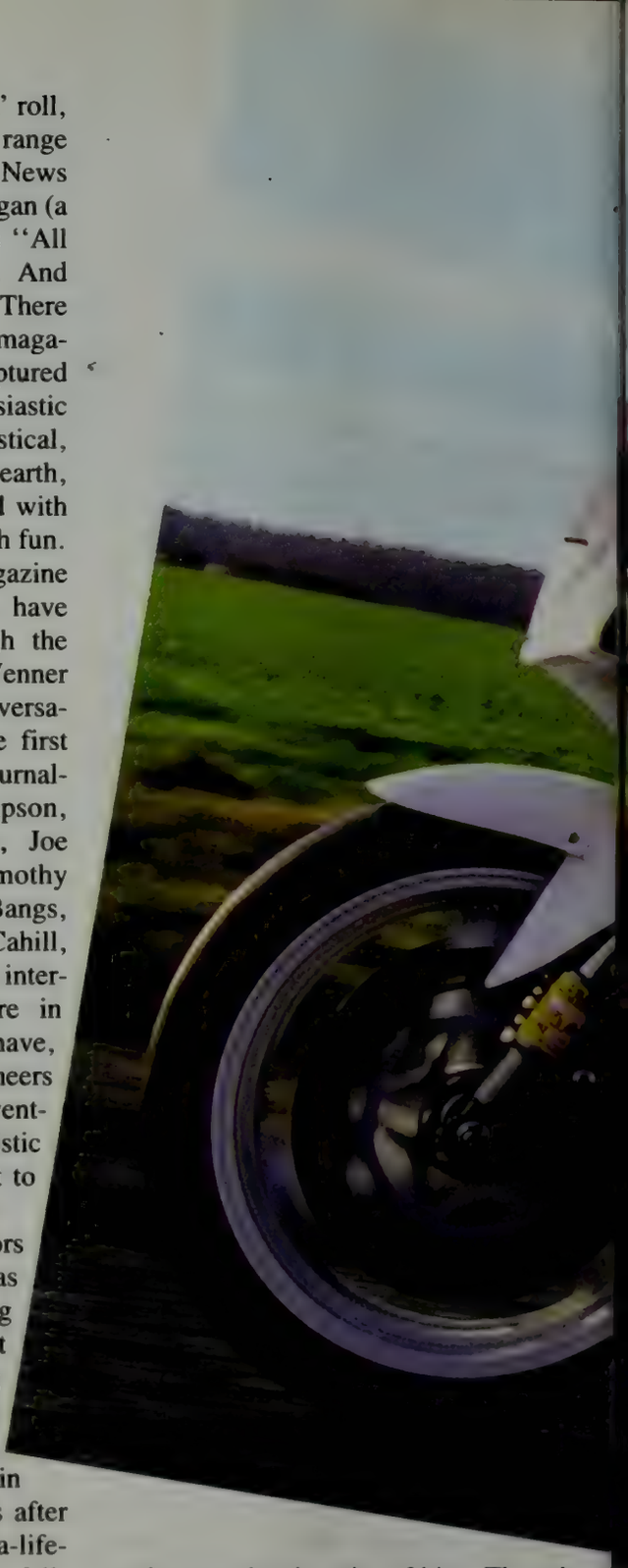
Vodka. Cocaine. Wild sex. Weird hours. Conspicuous consumption and, sometimes, conspicuous cruelty. Wenner's excesses during the seventies and eighties are so infamous they've sometimes obscured his accomplishment. A Berkeley dropout, Wenner launched *Rolling Stone* in 1967 with the help of his more established co-founder, the late music critic Ralph J. Gleason, and a grand total of $7,500. The first issue sold all of five thousand copies; an early promotion campaign offered a free roach clip with every paid subscription. "You have to envision the scene," says Wenner. "I'm twenty-one years old and the people helping me out are all volunteers and nobody's had any real experience with what they're doing. You can sort of gather the level of professional expertise we were at."

Yet right from the start, *Rolling Stone* embodied Wenner's most piercing perception: that the baby-boom generation had become a unified social force, and that its rallying point was not political or economic but cultural—rock 'n' roll, along with the admittedly fuzzy range of values it represented. "All the News That Fits" was the magazine's slogan (a takeoff on *The New York Times*'s "All the News That's Fit to Print"). And Wenner tailored that fit perfectly. There were other rock and "youth" magazines, but only *Rolling Stone* captured the era's preferred tone—enthusiastic but skeptical, druggy but not mystical, at once intellectual and down-to-earth, flower-child and macho, obsessed with issues but even more obsessed with fun.

Twenty-five years later, the magazine still works, but the glory days have plainly passed. Combing through the three special issues with which Wenner is celebrating *Rolling Stone*'s anniversary, readers will discover that the first few generations of *Stone*-grown journalists—people like Hunter Thompson, Greil Marcus, Annie Leibovitz, Joe Eszterhas, Timothy Ferris, Timothy Crouse, David Felton, Lester Bangs, Jon Landau, Jim Miller, Tim Cahill, and Howard Kohn—were able to interact with the surrounding culture in ways that their successors never have, perhaps never can. They were pioneers of a sort, breaking barriers, reinventing what news was, what journalistic prose was, what magazines ought to look like.

Nowadays, Wenner's detractors grouse about how the magazine has "sold out." It's not on the cutting edge anymore, they complain; it follows trends instead of starting them; it's not sharp or critical enough. But how could *Rolling Stone* remain on the cutting edge in a culture without one? Five years after Wenner conceived his once-in-a-lifetime idea, its premise was already falling apart. The baby-boom generation splintered, and so did rock 'n' roll. Wenner's goal necessarily shifted: now he had to keep *Stone* rolling atop a world that was quaking beneath it. His flexibility, his knack for sniffing the cultural breeze and bending with it, may have made the magazine seem at times trivial and compromised, but it also kept *Rolling Stone* alive.

Still, people find it hard to take Jann Wenner seriously—or maybe it would be more accurate to say that he *makes* it hard. He has never shaken the image of the boy hustler, the undereducated overreacher whose magazine has flourished not because but in spite of him. Though his days of conducting scorched-earth editorial meetings while snorting cocaine and swigging from a Wyborova bottle are over, Wenner is still a bundle of unruly energies: he talks too fast, eats too much, twitches and scratches, flatters people and then insults them, weeps nostalgically, brags like a teenager, and flirts and charms like a boulevardier. Even the way he walks is rife with contradiction. From the waist up, he's all swivel and sashay; from the waist down, he clomps and marches, a caricature of grim determination. A runway model above, Robocop below.



To watch him sweep through the

"Ninety-nine percent of the people would love to do what I get to do," Wenner says.

company offices is to witness a small-scale ticker-tape parade, with Wenner greeting the masses, knocking on editors' windows, glad-handing astonished music reviewers, winking at lowly assistants who turn their beaming faces Jannward as though expecting fairy dust. Wenner exults in his power, but, like a *(Continued on page 167)*



IRON JANN
Wenner burning rubber, *above*, and with his children on the beach in Amagansett, *right*.

California Dream Girls

"We're gonna shock them with this one, boy," says Carnie Wilson, standard-bearer for that covey of thrushes known as Wilson Phillips. Does this mean the group has forsaken the vanilla-swirl uplift of its multi-platinum first album for a *raw new rabid sound*? Don't be ridic. As soon as the sky opens on their new album, *Shadows and Light* (SBK/EMI), the harmonies waft like wind chimes from heaven.

But there are cracks in the crystal. "People think we're just three rich California girls who grew up on sunshine," says Chynna Phillips, whose parents made up one-half of the Mamas and the Papas. Yet her childhood was no citrus paradise. Her song "All the Way from New York" is an attempt to reach



Three squares: Chynna Phillips, Carnie Wilson, Wendy Wilson (with admirers).

out to her father, whose drug use reduced him to a distant rumor in her life. Recording it was wrenching: "I walked out of the studio crying." Carnie had a sob when she and sister Wendy séanced *their* out-of-it dad, the Charles Ives of surf music, Brian Wilson. "When Wendy started singing, I was hysterical," says Carnie. Yet the first single off the album is titled "You Won't See Me Cry." IRONIC, isn't it?

With a new album comes a new tour. But don't look for a trail of trashed hotel rooms. "We're not jaded, we're not fucked up on drugs, we don't drink, we're really square," says Carnie. "We don't have groupies." Then who, pray tell, are the two boy toys in this picture? They sure don't *look* like roadies. —**JAMES WOLCOTT**



WILSON PHILLIPS

"We're gonna shock them with this one, boy."

Photograph by **FIROOZ ZAHEDI**

STYLED BY LAUREN EHRENFELD; HAIR BY DEANNA; MAKEUP BY PAUL STARR; DRESS AND CATSUIT BY ROBIN PICCONE; OVERSKIRT BY TODD OLDHAM; JEANS BY GIORGIO ARMANI; JEWELRY BY LEE BREVARD

HOW



TERRIBLE IS IVAN?

John Demjanjuk awaits appeal on the death sentence delivered against him as the notorious Ivan the Terrible—the mass murderer of Treblinka—in an extraordinarily emotional but deeply flawed war-crimes trial in Israel, the first since Adolf Eichmann's in 1961. Now, as FREDRIC DANNEN reports, evidence unearthed by Demjanjuk's family suggests the courts have the wrong man—evidence the U.S. government allegedly had access to all along



John Demjanjuk, with a guard, at his Jerusalem trial in 1986. *Inset:* Ivan Marchenko, Demjanjuk's allegedly lethal look-alike, in 1941.



njanjuk, *below*, a 1951 photograph sed on his .S. immigration pplication. lachenko, *right*, n his wedding hotograph.



John Demjanjuk Jr. was partway out the door when an Israeli jabbed a finger at him and offered some words of advice: "*You* should kill your father!"

Judge Zvi Tal of the Jerusalem District Court spoke without expression, but his words were venomous. After a yearlong trial, there could be no doubt, he said, that the defendant, John Demjanjuk, a retired Cleveland autoworker, was in fact the Nazi war criminal known as "Ivan the Terrible." The court did not believe Demjanjuk's protestations of mistaken identity. He was the sadistic motorman who had operated the gas chambers at the Nazi death camp in Treblinka, Poland, between 1942 and 1943. The only suitable punishment for such a monster, an "arch-henchman" who "with his very own hands" had "humiliated, degraded, victimized," and murdered tens of thousands of Jews, was death by hanging.

Seated in a wooden box, with headphones clamped to his ears translating the court's Hebrew into his native Ukrainian, Demjanjuk quietly shook his head but otherwise showed no emotion as his death sentence was proclaimed. The reaction of the spectators in the courtroom, a theater converted for what had been billed as the Nazi trial of the decade, was different. Hundreds rose to their feet to applaud, to embrace, to chant "Death! Death!," to shout insults at Demjanjuk's Israeli lawyer. Some were weeping. A group of teenagers, led by an elderly Holocaust survivor from Florida, launched into a chorus of "Am Yisrael Hai"—"The People of Israel Live."

In the mêlée, one spectator thought it might be prudent to leave the courtroom as quickly as possible: the defendant's son. John Demjanjuk Jr. was partway out the door when an Israeli of roughly the same age—twenty-two—jabbed a finger at him and offered some words of advice:

"*You* should kill your father!"

Recalling the scene today, four years later, John junior is still struck by the vehemence of that remark, coming from someone born, like himself, two decades after the end of World War II. But then, the testimony heard in that Jerusalem courtroom had vividly brought back to life the horrors of Treblinka and the unthinkable sadism of the man called Ivan

the Terrible—"a creature," said one survivor, "not from this planet." Eyewitnesses told how Ivan tormented naked prisoners on their way to the gas chambers by hacking off pieces of their flesh with his sword—ears, noses, women's breasts. How he routinely bashed skulls with an iron pipe. How he drove a wood drill into a man's buttocks and threatened to shoot the victim if he made a sound. And how, with demonic relish, he ran the engine that pumped carbon monoxide into Treblinka's gas chambers, which, in one year, killed more than 850,000 men, women, and children.

One by one, five Treblinka survivors identified Ivan Demjanjuk—he had Anglicized his first name on becoming an American citizen in 1958—as the man of their nightmares. They hadn't known the Ukrainian motorman's last name but said they could never forget his features. One survivor stood face-to-face with Demjanjuk and saw the "murderous eyes" of his tormentor. When Demjanjuk (pronounced Dem-*yahn*-yook) took the stand to present his alibi—that he had been a Red Army P.O.W. during the war—he was vague, inconsistent, and entirely unconvincing.

You should kill your father! Since 1976, when John junior was an eleven-year-old altar boy, people had been telling him that his father was one of the greatest mass murderers in history. Today a tall, polite man with a pencil mustache, John says he never once believed his father was capable of Ivan the Terrible's bloodlust. Far from feeling ashamed, he had dropped out of college to work full-time on Demjanjuk's defense. And with the conviction and death sentence on appeal before Israel's Supreme Court—the final arbiter—he knew there was one hope remaining to save his father from the gallows. Demjanjuk needed a better alibi, one that was absolutely airtight.

And that, John junior figured, meant only one thing. He had to find the real Ivan the Terrible.

Now, four years after the reading of the death sentence, with Demjanjuk still awaiting execution, John junior, along with his brother-in-law Edward Nishnic, has apparently accomplished his mission. Thanks to dogged detective work, incredible luck, and the effects of glasnost in the Soviet Union, the two men—"a couple of cement-heads from Cleveland," in Nishnic's words—have dislodged a cache of confessions taken by the K.G.B. from Soviets who were posted at Treblinka. The statements—sixty-one to date—all identify the Ivan the Terrible of the gas chambers as a man named Ivan Marchenko.

Born in 1911, Marchenko, if he is alive today, is eighty-one. Ed Nishnic couldn't locate him, but he did find Marchenko's daughters in the Ukraine a few months ago and obtained his wedding picture. The resemblance to Demjanjuk is unmistakable. The same Israeli newspapers that once blindly supported the government's case have since published the wedding photo and quoted from the Soviet statements.

The new evidence amounts to nothing less than a political fiasco for the Jewish state. For a year the Demjanjuk trial had been televised and broadcast live on the radio as a means of educating a new generation about the Holocaust. It was also clearly designed to canonize the Treblinka survivors who took the stand, even though precedent had shown that superannuated eyewitness testimony is often unreliable. It now appears that this emphasis on the survivors is where the case went so tragically wrong: the court was all along forced to reconcile their testimony with one key piece of physical evidence—an SS photo identification card—that put Demjanjuk in outposts *other than* Treblinka. The court performed this feat by concluding that Demjanjuk had been shuttled back and forth, but it seems there was a better explanation: the survivors were mistaken.

Demjanjuk, who turned seventy-two in April, has spent six years in solitary confinement in Israel, after a year's incarceration in the United States. His fate is now in the hands of five Israeli Supreme Court justices. Their decision may come at any time, though it could also take months. The judges have given the chief prosecutor until now to produce additional documents, which, he has promised, will vindicate the original verdict and the survivor witnesses.

Hardly anyone now believes Demjanjuk will hang, yet it is far from certain that he will be set free. There is still the troubling matter of the photo ID card, which, if upheld as authentic by the Supreme Court, puts Demjanjuk in the SS in *some* capacity, possibly as a common guard—the kind that Israel has never shown the least interest in prosecuting. Unfortunately for Demjanjuk, he is now caught up in the system, and, doubly unfortunate, under a quirk of Israeli law, a person can be convicted of charges not specified in his indictment. Therefore, it is possible that the Supreme Court will find Demjanjuk guilty of being, as journalist Gitta Sereny puts it, "Ivan the Less Terrible."

John junior is nonetheless optimistic. In general, he thinks Israel has treated his father more fairly than did the U.S. Justice Department, which built the initial case against Demjanjuk, leading him to be stripped of his citizenship and extradited. In the course of their detective work, John and his brother-in-law obtained Justice Department documents—some of them retrieved from dumpsters—that are, in their own way, as disturbing as the long-hidden Soviet protocols. One set of documents indicates that, in their zeal to prove that Demjanjuk was Ivan of Treblinka, U.S. government lawyers used false testimony from an ex-Nazi witness. And as far back as 1978, the Justice Department was aware of a gas-chamber operator at Treblinka named Marchenko who fit the profile of Ivan the Terrible, yet amazingly chose not to pursue this lead.

Although the documents fall short of proving a "frame-up," as Demjanjuk's family claims, they make a strong case for prosecutorial misconduct. They also show that the U.S. government handed the state of Israel a case that was oversold from the beginning.

"This is command central," Ed Nishnic says, leading a visitor down into the basement of the Demjanjuk house in Seven Hills, a suburb of Cleveland. It was here, amid groaning file cabinets, a word processor, and a fax machine, that Nishnic and his brother-in-law conducted their hunt for Ivan the Terrible.

John junior grew up in this red brick ranch house, small enough to be heated by a wood-burning stove. Vera Demjanjuk, the wife of the accused, a petite gray-haired woman who speaks with a thick Ukrainian accent, moves nervously about the house, clean-

ing. Vera will not speak to the press. Nor will her two older children—Lydia, whose first marriage ended in divorce in the thick of Demjanjuk's denaturalization trial, and Irene, who is married to Ed Nishnic and is the mother of Demjanjuk's two grandchildren. "My wife has just become destroyed over this thing," Nishnic says. "A wreck."

By contrast, Nishnic, tall and Slavic, with a neatly trimmed black beard, and John junior are ebullient. For them, the case is both an obsession and a labor of love. A former employment agent, Nishnic has worked on nothing but Demjanjuk's defense since he and Irene were married in 1983. John junior completed two years toward a finance degree at Cleveland State before turning to the case full-time, and in 1990 he married an insurance executive. Both men are supported by their wives, and by donations from the Ukrainian community, though these have largely dried up. John says the defense fund is more than $160,000 in debt. The office phone has been cut off six times in eight months. Both men agree their financial problems would be over if they allowed Holocaust deniers and other hate groups—whom they refer to loathingly as "the lunatic fringe" and "shithead revisionists"—to use the Demjanjuk case as a forum for their views.

As much as the two men love to talk about the case, it is difficult to get them to say much about Demjanjuk himself. Apparently, there isn't much to say; his own lawyer calls him "a limited person." (Demjanjuk repeatedly frustrated his prosecutors by giving away nothing besides a vacant stare or a foolish grin in court; one complained bitterly that his "Nazi mind" refused "to reveal itself.") Unable to speak good English despite thirty-four years in America, Demjanjuk comes off as rather an oaf—big, bulky, and bald-headed, with wrists so thick he requires a special set of manacles. As he stepped off the plane in Israel, he astounded police by asking if he could kiss the ground of the Holy Land. On his first day in the Jerusalem court, he bellowed out "*Boker tov!*"—Hebrew for "Good morning"—and waved cheerfully to the spectators. When one witness made a crack about his bald pate, he literally doubled over with laughter, his entire head turning red.

"My father," says John junior, "is just your typical immigrant who came over on the boat trying to escape Communism and make a better life. Go into any Serbian or Ukrainian church and you'll meet a hundred like him."

In his windowless cell at Ayalon Prison, near Tel Aviv, Demjanjuk is denied access to the press—and any other visitors, apart from his lawyer and immediate family. Thus, the best available narrative of his life comes from his testimony in the Jerusalem court.

Ivan Demjanjuk was born on April 3, 1920, in the village of Dub Macharenzi. Both parents were disabled—his father, Nikolai, lost several fingers in World War I, and his mother, Olga, had caught a severe cold while pregnant with Ivan and could no longer bend her right leg. Ivan attended the village school for nine years, but completed only four grades because he missed too many classes. The reason for his absences, he said, was his family's poverty—whenever his father found work, he wore the one pair of shoes.

In 1932 and 1933, Ivan suffered through Stalin's man-made famine, which left between 7 and 10 million Ukrainians dead of starvation. "People were lying dead in their homes, in the yards, on the roads, exposed to sunlight," Demjanjuk said. "Nobody collected them." In desperation, Nikolai sold his house for the equivalent of eight loaves of bread and moved the family to a collective farm near Moscow. But there was no work; the Demjanjuks soon returned to their village.

Ivan eventually got a job as a tractor driver, which made him prime Red Army material. In 1938 he had joined the Komsomol—the Communist youth organization—but only, he said, because of peer pressure. Two years later he got his draft notice, which advised that persons to be inducted "had to have two pairs of underpants, a spoon, and a plate. I was very poor...and I came to the recruitment office without any underwear." He was sent home, but was called a second time, in 1941, and inducted, still without undergarments.

After artillery training Demjanjuk was sent to the front. On the banks of the river Prut the Soviet army fell under heavy German fire and retreated. Near the Dnieper River, he was hit by shrapnel from an artillery shell, which had to be removed from his back; he still bears a scar. By early 1942 he was back fighting at Kerch, on the Crimean peninsula, and it was there, during a heavy rain, that Demjanjuk and his unit were taken prisoner by the Germans.

From this point until Germany surrendered to the Allies in May 1945 there are two distinct versions of Demjanjuk's life—the one told by Demjanjuk and the one told by the Israeli district court. Neither may be the truth.

The Demjanjuk version runs as follows: After being captured in the Crimea, he was taken to the German prisoner-of-war camp in Rovno, then in Poland. A few weeks later he was transferred to the P.O.W. camp in Chelm, Poland, where he remained for eighteen months, until the spring of 1944. Conditions at Chelm were subhuman—Ukrainian prisoners died by the tens of thousands of starvation, cholera, and dysentery. The Germans put Demjanjuk to work digging peat. After Chelm, he was taken to yet another camp, in Graz, Austria, where he was given a tattoo to indicate his blood type; after the war he had the tattoo removed, leaving scar tissue on his left arm. In February 1945 he was allowed to join the Russian Liberation Army, an anti-Stalinist militia funded and armed by the Germans.

In the court's version Demjanjuk *did* go to Rovno in May 1942, but within two months, like hundreds of other Ukrainian P.O.W.'s, decided to improve his lot by volunteering to work for the Nazis. He was taken to Trawniki, the Nazi training camp for Soviet defectors, near the Polish city of Lublin. There he was issued a uniform, a rifle, and a photo ID card, and taught how to be a *Wachmann,* or guard, at other Polish camps, where Jews were to be imprisoned and slaughtered. The insignia he later removed was tattooed by the SS. Between September 1942 and August 1943, Demjanjuk served at Treblinka as Ivan the Terrible, operator of the gas chamber's engine.

The prosecution had physical evidence that, if authentic, supported part of its version and demolished Demjanjuk's alibi: the Trawniki card. First shown to the U.S. Justice Department in the early eighties by the Soviet Embassy, the card bears a photo that appears to be of Demjanjuk. It also

describes correctly his date of birth, father's name, hair color—dark blond—and the scar on his back. There are, however, some problems with the card. Staple holes in the photo indicate that it was removed from some other document. Demjanjuk's height is given as five feet nine when in fact he is closer to six feet. Defense lawyers—and Demjanjuk himself—pounced on these flaws to argue that the card was a K.G.B. forgery designed to discredit the Ukrainian-American community. In the end, fifty days of the trial were spent evaluating the card, down to the rust stain left by a paper clip.

But even if the card was genuine, there was another problem that outweighed all the others—it did not mention Treblinka. On the contrary, the card indicates that on September 22, 1942, Demjanjuk was posted to L. G. Okzow, a work farm near Chelm, and that on March 27, 1943, he was sent to Sobibor, a Polish death camp similar to Treblinka. There isn't a hint of what his specific chores would have been at those places.

Demjanjuk and the Israeli version are in agreement about the details of his life after V-E Day. In 1945 he ended up at a displaced persons' camp in Landshut, Germany, and it was there that he met Vera Kowlowa, whom he later married. Over the next few years, they moved through several more D.P. camps in Germany, including one in Ulm, where Lydia was born in 1950. A year later, Demjanjuk applied for immigration to the United States. On his application form, he gave his nationality as Polish. (Demjanjuk lied, he later explained, because he was terrified of being sent back to the Soviet Union after having served in the Russian Liberation Army.) In February 1952, the application having been granted, Ivan, Vera, and Lydia boarded a troopship and arrived in New York harbor.

Their next stop was Decatur, Indiana, where the Demjanjuks lived and worked on a farm. Then new friends lured them to Cleveland, where the Ford Motor Company was expanding its plant. In August 1952, Ford hired Demjanjuk, for $1.80 an hour, as a mechanic in the engine hot-test department. Before long, he was promoted to motor balancer and joined the U.A.W. local. In the meantime, Vera found work in the coiling department at General Electric. Both of them would remain with their respective employers until retirement. Initially they lived in the Cleveland suburb of Parma, where Irene and John junior were born, but in 1973 they moved to Seven Hills. Every Sunday the family attended services at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Church. Demjanjuk spent his free time tending his garden and playing with the children. "We were," John junior says, "the perfect family."



Prosecutor Michael "Mickey" Shaked, *right*, looks on as Treblinka survivor Gustav Boraks testifies at the trial that Demjanjuk is "Ivan the Terrible." Demjanjuk's attorney for the appeal, Yoram Sheftel, below with his client, calls himself "definitely the most hated criminal lawyer" in Israel.



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The American Dream began to unravel for Demjanjuk soon after the move to Seven Hills. In the mid-seventies, a pro-Soviet journalist in New York returned from a visit to the Ukraine with a list of more than seventy alleged Nazi collaborators living in the United States. Included on that list was Ivan Demjanjuk, who was accused of having served as a *Wachmann* at the death camp in Sobibor, Poland, and at the concentration camp in Flossenburg, Germany. There was no mention of Treblinka with regard to Demjanjuk, although a Miami man on the list, Fedor Fedorenko, was alleged to have been posted there.

The list soon found its way to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The I.N.S. sent Demjanjuk's 1951 immigration photo to the Israeli police, along with the Sobibor allegation. Demjanjuk was thirty-one in the picture—exactly the same age that Ivan Marchenko would have been in 1942 at Treblinka. The Israeli authorities were also given a head shot of Fedor Fedorenko, and photos of fifteen other suspected Nazis in America.

It was then, in early 1976, that the case against Demjanjuk appears to have taken its first, and fateful, wrong turn, as Israeli police committed two serious procedural errors. First, they pasted the seventeen I.N.S. photos onto three pieces of cardboard, to be shown to potential witnesses; on the third piece, beneath six small, blurry photographs, were large and sharp snapshots of Demjanjuk and Fedorenko. In police parlance, the photo spread was "suggestive"—the eye immediately went to the better-quality pictures.

The second mistake was even worse. Under accepted police procedure, no names of suspects are given in advance. Yet the Israeli police placed the following ad in the newspaper: "The Nazi Crime Investigation Division is conducting



...he Nazi identity
...ard linking Demjanjuk
...death-camp duty
...Sobibor—
...ut not Treblinka.
...Demjanjuk's
...vife, Vera, *inset*,
...ttending the trial.

an investigation against the Ukrainians Ivan Demjanjuk and Fedor Fedorenko. Survivors of the Death Camps at Sobibor and Treblinka are requested to report to the Israel Police Headquarters."

Thus, the Treblinka survivors who answered the ad may have shown up at headquarters thinking they were meant to identify the Ukrainian named Ivan. As it happened, no Sobibor survivor recognized Demjanjuk from the photo spread, but, sure enough, Israelis who had escaped from Treblinka zeroed in on his picture. Among these were four men who, a decade later, would stand as witnesses at the Demjanjuk trial in Jerusalem: Eliyahu Rosenberg, Josef Czarny, Gustav Boraks, and Pinchas Epstein. As they settled on Demjanjuk's photo, their statements were duly recorded:

Rosenberg: "That man looks very similar to the Ukrainian Ivan. . . whom they call Ivan Grozny [Ivan the Terrible]."

Czarny: "*Dos iz Ivan! Ivan Grozny von Treblinka!* My God! He lives!"

Boraks: "This is the photo of Ivan Grozny. I recognize him with one hundred percent certainty."

Epstein: "This photo reminds me very strongly of Ivan."

Interestingly, Rosenberg and Epstein, who had the most day-to-day contact with Ivan the Terrible, were the least emphatic in their initial identification. Epstein, Czarny, and other Treblinka survivors also picked out Fedorenko from the photo spread.

The Israeli authorities turned their information back over to the I.N.S., noting that the agency must have been mistaken about Demjanjuk—he had apparently been at Treblinka, not Sobibor. It was now up to the I.N.S. to take action.



The United States has never been equipped to conduct Nazi war-crimes trials; the most an American court could do to Fedorenko or Demjanjuk was revoke his citizenship and order him deported or extradited. The first to be prosecuted was Fedorenko. The case looked like a sure winner—in a pre-trial deposition, Fedorenko admitted he had been a *Wachmann* at Treblinka, but said he was merely a perimeter guard who had been "forced" to serve the Germans. At his denaturalization trial, which opened in May 1978 in Fort Lauderdale, survivors of Treblinka such as Epstein and Czarny testified against Fedorenko. Yet, to everyone's amazement, Judge Norman Roettger acquitted Fedorenko on all counts. He ruled that the Israeli survivors were "coached" and "not credible." Moreover, he accepted Fedorenko's defense, calling him a "prisoner-guard." (This oxymoron is highly offensive to death-camp survivors, who tend to recall all Ukrainian guards as enthusiastic participants.)

The Justice Department was stunned by Roettger's decision and considered appealing the case. In September 1978, an assistant to the solicitor general named Allan Ryan Jr. wrote a fifteen-page memo discouraging an appeal. On reflection, however, Ryan not only changed his mind but successfully argued the appeal before the Fifth Circuit in New

INSET PHOTOGRAPH BY ISAAC HARARI



John Demjanjuk Jr., in the basement office of the house he grew up in. Until the Nazi charges, "we were the perfect family." At rear, his brother-in-law Jed Nishnic.

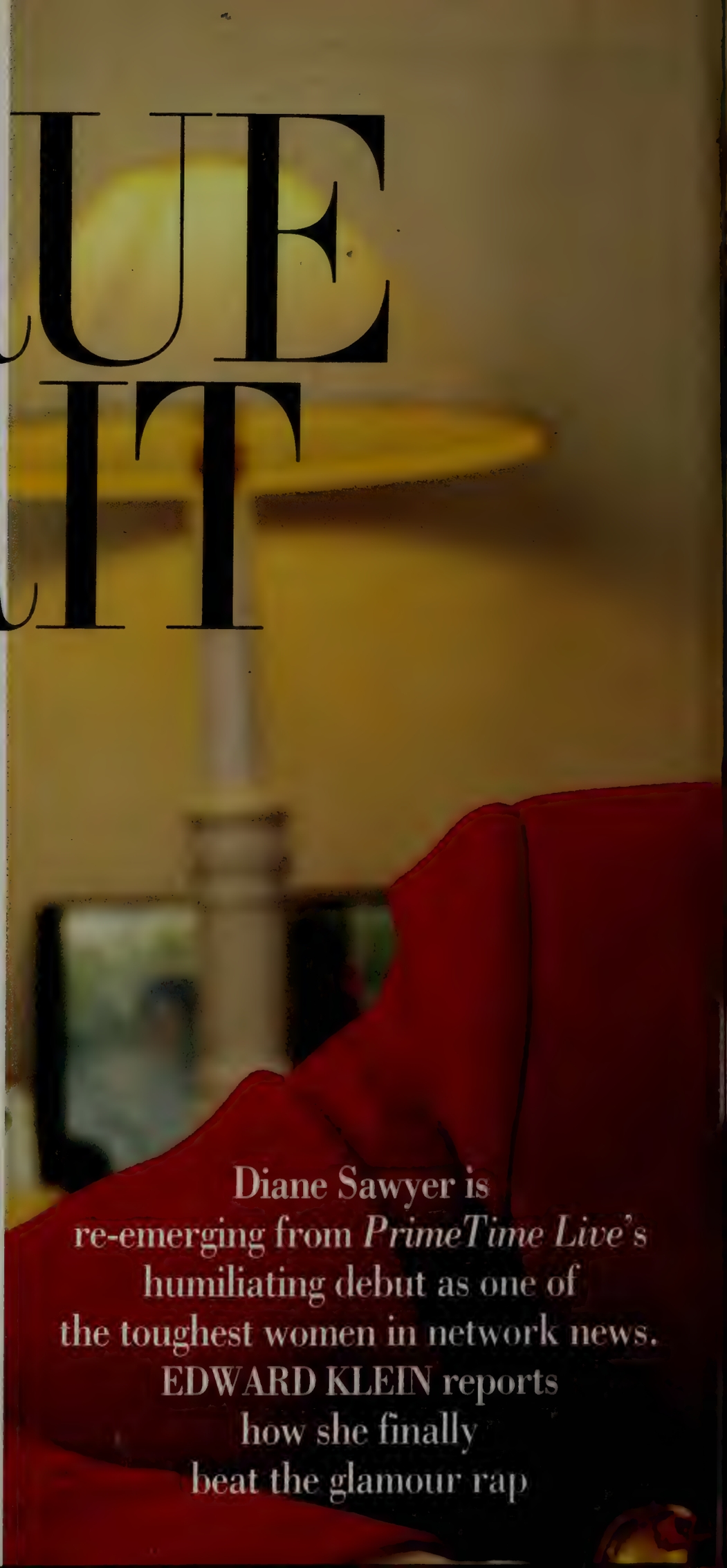
Orleans. The court ruled that Fedorenko's role as a death-camp guard—whether or not he had committed atrocities—was enough to have him denaturalized. Fedorenko was returned to the place of his birth, the Soviet Union, where he was executed by firing squad for being a Nazi collaborator.

In the summer of 1979, as the Fedorenko case was being played out, the Justice Department launched its own Nazi-hunting unit, the Office of Special Investigations. A few months later, Allan Ryan was recruited as O.S.I. director. By this time; John Demjanjuk already knew he was in trouble. In 1976, soon after the Israeli survivors fingered his photograph, he had been summoned to the Cleveland U.S. Attorney's Office for a deposition which, on advice of counsel, he had declined to give. A federal complaint was filed a year later, and his first deposition was taken in 1978. When Demjanjuk's denaturalization trial finally began in February 1981, the O.S.I. and the Cleveland U.S. Attorney's Office prosecuted him jointly. Treblinka survivors were again called upon, including a few who had testified against Fedorenko—and been traumatized by not being believed. This time they had nothing to fear. In June 1981, Cleveland judge Frank Battisti handed down his forty-four-page verdict, which concluded that "defendant was present at Treblinka in 1942–1943." Demjanjuk was stripped of his citizenship.

In his decision, Judge Battisti singled out the videotaped testimony of Otto Horn. Horn was a retired German nurse and the only Treblinka SS man to be acquitted of crimes against humanity at the 1959–64 trials in Düsseldorf. (The acquittal remains controversial: a report by the Polish Commission Investigating Nazi Crimes cites Horn for "special cruelty" at the camp.) Horn had known Ivan the Terrible well; they had worked together *(Continued on page 174)*

Photograph by JONATHAN BECKER

TRUE GRIT



Diane Sawyer is re-emerging from *PrimeTime Live*'s humiliating debut as one of the toughest women in network news. EDWARD KLEIN reports how she finally beat the glamour rap

"I am not going to bore you with my advice and talk to you about rehabilitating yourself unless you are serious," Joan Ganz Cooney told her close friend Diane Sawyer. "If you want to quit the television business, go right ahead."

It was a fall afternoon, and they were looking out over the Hudson River from the living room of a charming house that Diane Sawyer and her husband, director Mike Nichols, had leased. Sawyer seemed to have a strange look on her face, which Cooney—the creator of *Sesame Street* and chairman of the executive committee of the Children's Television Workshop—interpreted as the expression of a woman who half wanted

Photographs by HARRY BENSON



The Diane Sawyer mystique: "She invented this character. She's what Lois Lane would have been if there were satellites."

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Photographs by HARRY BENSON



The Diane Sawyer mystique: "She invented this character. She's what Lois Lane would have been if there were satellites."

"From now on, it's not just *PrimeTime.*

to be treated like a child and half wanted to hear the bitter truth.

"Well," Sawyer said with an impish grin, "if I were interested, how would you rehabilitate me?"

It was just the opening Cooney had been hoping for. She had worked in television for nearly forty years, and she firmly believed that Diane Sawyer had the stuff to be a mega-star. Yet, from the moment *PrimeTime Live* premiered, in the summer of 1989, her friend had become the butt of jokes and the object of ridicule. Sawyer's very first interview on the new show, with a sneering Roseanne Barr, was panned by the critics as embarrassingly lame. Her questioning of Marla Maples about her sex life with Donald Trump came across as sleazy, demeaning both interviewer and interviewee. Her failure to interrupt a scripted segment and retrieve an earring that had fallen on the anchor desk was taken as proof by some that she was contrived and totally unspontaneous—out of her league when it came to live television.

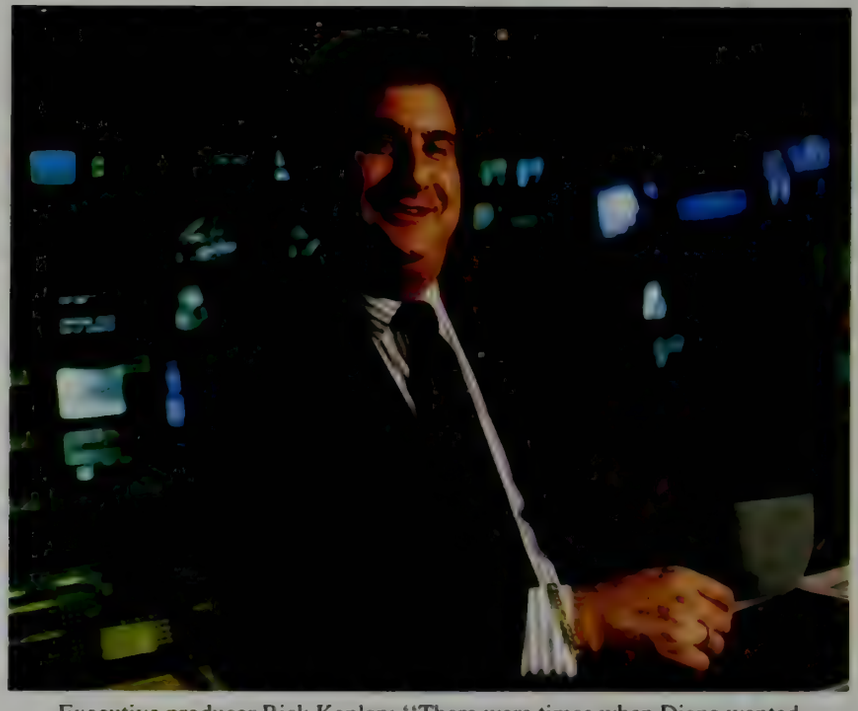
And everything about the show seemed wrong—the live audience, the space-age set with its overpowering grid of television screens, the lack of chemistry between Sawyer and her co-anchor, Sam Donaldson, with whom, paradoxically, she got along better offscreen than on. "It was very hard not to say to yourself, If only I could be this spontaneous Kathie Lee to Sam's Regis, then our chemistry would work," Sawyer recalled. "But I couldn't, and it didn't."

A few weeks into the show, Joan Cooney called and demanded to know why Sawyer was interviewing celebrities and movie stars and losing her news edge.

"We get ratings with the celebrity types," Sawyer explained.

"Let someone else do it," Cooney shot back. "And that amphitheater with the live audience—it's like throwing the Christians to the lions."

"After that first show, we were locked into some things that were rocking our teeth with their difficulty," Sawyer said later. "Sam and I talked about the terrifying difficulty of a studio audience that is watching both taped pieces and live pieces and forming an opinion, which was different than the opinion of the audience back home, and you had trouble figuring out who was your real audience. We knew we were a Hail Mary pass at that point."



Executive producer Rick Kaplan: "There were times when Diane wanted me off the show. She never told me directly. Others told me."

Another time, Joan Cooney screamed at her over the phone, "Listen, I've been in this business since 1953, and we were thrilled when videotape came on stream, because it meant that we could do a better show. Live is for a football game. Live is for a press conference. But live is not for going to the State Department at ten o'clock at night when no one's there."

Even after Sam Donaldson withdrew to Washington and the live audience disappeared and the show became a taped clone of *60 Minutes*, things didn't get any better for Diane Sawyer. Joan Cooney became increasingly concerned by the weekly spectacle of her friend's public humiliation, and by how Diane was retreating into a shell. The two women used to chat on the phone regularly, but now weeks would go by and Joan wouldn't hear from Diane. When Joan did manage to get her on the phone, Diane would laugh at everything, but it was the laughter of someone who was deeply discouraged and who seemed depressed. Finally, Joan suggested that Diane see a therapist.

"She urged me to get psychiatric help, because she said I was depressed," Sawyer recalled. "But I didn't think that was what I needed. I needed the opportunity to do the kind of work I wanted to do. Leslie Stahl [Sawyer's successor at *60 Minutes*] and I would talk about the problem a little bit, and she'd remind me that we have the most wonderful work in the world. The women of Kentucky—my mother and aunts—would call me."

But she wasn't getting much support from men. Her old boss at CBS, Don Hewitt—the creator of *60 Minutes* and the man she had jilted when she went to ABC—was telling his friends in the media that Diane Sawyer was an outright embarrassment on *PrimeTime Live*. At the same time, Hewitt phoned her on a number of occasions and urged her to come back to CBS.

She was no longer in regular contact with Richard Holbrooke, the investment banker with whom she had been involved for seven years before her marriage in the spring of 1988 to Mike Nichols. Holbrooke, a former assistant secretary of state who had brilliant connections in both Washington and New York City, had been deeply involved in every aspect of her career—helping her book interviews with important world leaders, critiquing the way she handled herself on television, even picking out her clothes.

By contrast, Mike Nichols, though second to none when it came to understanding staging, lighting, sets, and wardrobe, knew nothing about journalism and

It's got to be Diane Sawyer time."

cared less about politics. He had won an Academy Award as well as six Tony Awards, but the demands of his work were unrelenting, and he had no inclination to become his wife's Henry Higgins. "Mike is an aesthete, who lives in the world of the pleasing spectacle, and part of Diane's attraction for him is that he doesn't have to direct her," said a friend of both. "It's a great relief for him. She comes home and brings him no trouble—just trophies and stories of world leaders. She is the sun itself."

At ABC, Diane Sawyer and her executive producer, a combustible six-foot-seven bear of a man named Rick Kaplan, often clashed over the direction of the show, especially over her feeling that he wanted his female anchor to do the soft, cuddly stuff, while the harder segments went to macho Sam Donaldson or Chris Wallace, the show's chief correspondent. "I wasn't on *60 Minutes* because I did cooking lessons," she complained to ABC News president Roone Arledge during one of their frequent private dinners without Kaplan. She tried more than once to get Kaplan fired, but Arledge—who considered Diane Sawyer to be one of the biggest talents in broadcast news—couldn't find a suitable replacement.



Co-anchor Sam Donaldson: Paradoxically, Sawyer got along with him better offscreen than on.

Arledge was mortified by his own powerlessness. But he was distracted by a bruising corporate battle over his budget, and by demands from his bosses at Capital Cities/ABC that he come up with more and more news programs as substitutes for costly entertainment shows. People often compared Roone Arledge to Howard Hughes—another elusive genius—and, indeed, as the pressures mounted, Arledge became harder to find around the office or reach on the telephone. "To Diane's horror," Sam Donaldson said, "even though Roone Arledge had repeatedly demonstrated he was a creative genius, this show was in great danger of going down the drain, and Roone was unable to wave a magic wand that could immediately reverse that." In one bleak moment of despair, Arledge confessed to Diane Sawyer that, although Cap Cities had guaranteed him two years on the prime-time lineup, he was thinking of yanking the show off the air so that he could retool it.

"If this show doesn't work," Joan Cooney warned Diane Sawyer that autumn afternoon, shortly after the show's first-year anniversary, "they will cancel it. You've got a year to build up your reputation. You do not do one more fashion story, not one more celebrity, not one more ballet dancer. If you have to, call me first and ask me if you should do it. You've got to do serious pieces on foreign policy, serious investigative pieces. From now on, it's not just *PrimeTime*. It's got to be Diane Sawyer time."

Television is a collaborative medium, and it took the talents of many people to turn *PrimeTime Live* around, including the much-maligned Rick Kaplan and his team of young, hotshot producers. Now an unqualified success, the show gives the once mighty *L.A. Law* a real run for its ratings' money on Thursday nights, and it churns out millions of dollars in profits for ABC. However, if one person could be said to have saved *PrimeTime Live* from oblivion, that person was Diane Sawyer, who, in finding her own voice, gave the show its distinct personality.

"We believed we were the *Niña*, *Pinta*, and *Santa María*, and that we were sailing off to prove there was another world in television news," she told me. "And Roone didn't want to give up his dream. He wanted the best of *Nightline*, the best of *60 Minutes*, and the best of the town meetings—all in one show. He tried to cushion it for me as much as he could. Whenever an attack would come across, he'd say, 'You're great. They're wrong.' "

This was not the first time I had interviewed Diane Sawyer. We had talked extensively more than three years before, when Arledge, the master of the medium, had won her away from CBS with his mesmerizing dream of creating a revolutionary newsmagazine as a showcase for her. This time around, she seemed far more confident. She invited me to her New York pied-à-terre—a cozy penthouse duplex in an East Side hotel—which Mike Nichols recently had redone by the decorator Kitty Hawks. Sawyer greeted me at the elevator, dressed in jeans, a yellow sweater with a badly stretched V neck, and flats—the kind of getup you might expect a college girl to wear around the dorm, or Elaine May to don if she were doing a send-up of a bluestocking. These days, Sawyer takes no chances with the glamour rap. She was bitten for that when she posed for Annie Leibovitz for this magazine in 1987. Now she strives for high-mindedness at all times.

A lovely 1921 postcard-size Picasso rested on the mantel, a reminder that Mike Nichols has been a lifelong collector of art and horses and other beautiful objects. A *(Continued on page 170)*

Return of the WANDERER

After a stint in the Hollywood fast lane, author Richard Price is back to his streetwise roots. For his big new novel, *Clockers*, the writer turned investigative journalist by plunging into the cross fire of the crack wars and came back with a harrowing—and controversial—picture of life on the edge in a big-city ghetto.

RON ROSENBAUM reports

New York is a city famous for its talkers, its riffers, rappers, and raconteurs. But let's face it, a lot of them are seriously overrated—depend on canned routines and canned Attitude, self-congratulatory cynicism and stale camp snobbery. Ever since I came to Manhattan I kept hoping to partake of the promised feast of wit, but found, more often than not, name-droppers, know-it-alls, wise guys posing as wise men. You know who I mean.

Richard Price is one of the rare exceptions: he's a talented novelist, a critical and cult favorite for *The Wanderers* and *Ladies' Man*, a sought-after A-list screenwriter (*The Color of Money*, *Sea of Love*, the Scorsese episode of *New York Stories*) who's written the scripts for *two* just-wrapped De Niro movies (*Mad Dog and Glory* and *Night and the City*). But as a talker he's nothing less than a word-of-mouth living legend, one of the few in New York who actually deliver the goods.

"The guy is so fast it's hard to keep up," says his friend, novelist Pete Dexter, who won the National Book Award for *Paris Trout* and is no mean talker himself. "It's like he's already thought of everything you're thinking of and he comes up with remarks in seconds it would take you an hour to come up with—if you ever did. What he does is make you feel *stupid*, the little fuck."

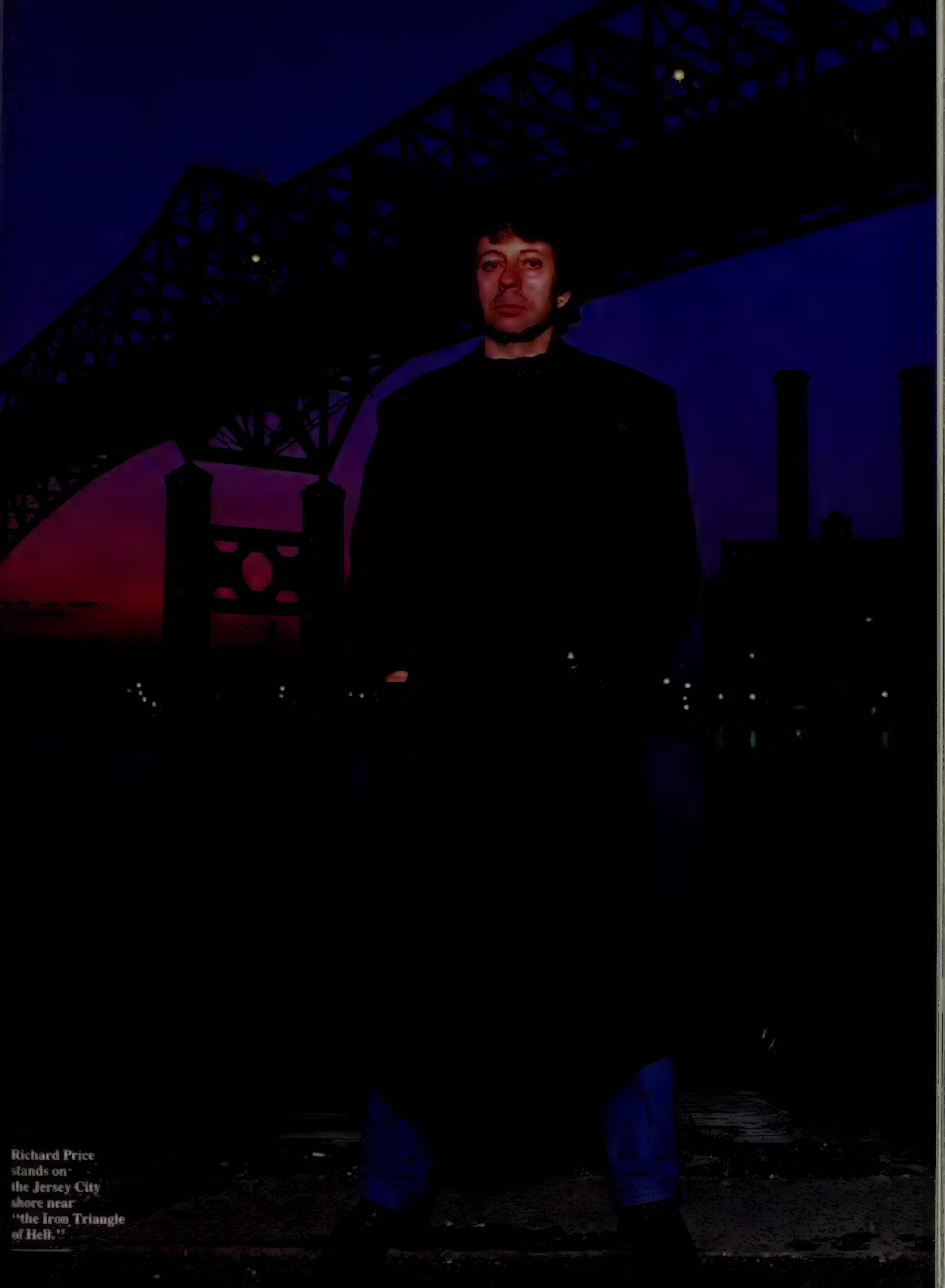
It's true: every time I've run into Price over the years, usually at a book party, he's always surrounded by a circle of writers, editors, the type of people who are usually the smartest talkers in *their* circles, and Price is rapidly, effortlessly tossing off observations that cut deeper, ring truer than anything anyone else is saying that night or on hundreds of other nights of allegedly great New York talk. He's kind of like Robin Williams, but with a real edge; he tells a story like Spalding Gray on amphetamines, and makes your average shock jock's efforts to be down and dirty, hip and scabrous seem about as transgressional as Willard Scott.

Still, there was one moment in the course of Price's research for *Clockers* (Houghton Mifflin), his much-anticipated new novel about life in the crack culture of the urban projects, in which words finally failed him—one terrifying situation he thought he wasn't going to be able to talk his way out of.

He'd set himself up for it, of course. He'd plunged into his research in the crack-plagued projects with the missionary fervor of someone who'd kicked a nasty coke habit himself some years ago. And who—seeing the destruction wrought by coke's metastasis into crack—wanted to capture the dark heart of it in his novel. For payback and for penance, he wanted to find his way into the belly of the beast.

And so Price, forty-two, hung around with the cops who police the projects of Jersey City—the devastated urban center right across the Hudson from lower Manhattan—went on patrols with them, spent hundreds of hours with pregnant teenage users in family shelters, with

Photograph by JAMES HAMILTON



Richard Price stands on the Jersey City shore near "the Iron Triangle of Hell."

tenants fighting crack and crime on their playgrounds.

But it still wasn't enough. He knew he'd have to put in time with the perps. He'd gotten one of the cops who thought he ought to see the drug war from the Other Side to introduce him to a coke-dealer kingpin in the projects, like the one Price calls "Rodney" in *Clockers*. A guy who was not only a coke tycoon but a charismatic dark-side father figure to the dozens of beeper-equipped teenage salesmen (or "clockers") he had out on the street, "mentoring" them by dispensing Ben Franklin–like work-ethic wisdom and career advice—a kind of coke-trade caricature of the old-fashioned capitalist entrepreneur. "A cross between Fagin and Bill Sikes," as Price puts it.

"The cop who introduced me told me, 'Don't worry, you'll be safe with Rodney. Nobody will fuck with you when you're with Rodney—he's a killer,' " Price recalls one evening in the lower-Broadway loft he shares with his wife and two daughters. "And I'm going, Great, I'm safe because he's a killer."

"There's no sin in wanting to write screenplays," Price says. "The sin is being good at them."

But the threat to his safety didn't come from Rodney. The danger was that, when he was out there in the projects with Rodney, cops who didn't know him would mistake him for a dealer. Or dealers who didn't know him would mistake him for a cop. The novelist as the ultimate undercover agent, an operative for no one but himself, without even a journalist's credentials to show a grand jury, or a kangaroo court in a crackhouse.

Which is what he thought he was heading for in one horrible four A.M. moment of truth. It was an incident that arose from what might be called an incomplete social introduction. It happened when Price was out cruising with Rodney, who was supervising his street-sales operation. The problem came up when Rodney offered to introduce Price to his biggest rival in the rock trade, a very large person on whom Price based "Champ" in *Clockers*.

"He's a big kid, eighteen years old, Mr. Big. These cops I was running with would have *retired* if they could only have busted this kid. And Champ's like—he's got six baby Rottweilers he's named after cops."

The problem with meeting Champ, he told Rodney, was that Champ had probably seen Price out traveling with these very cops. "This squad of cops I'd been running with was there to torture, harass, strip, dickie-check, teeth-check all Champ's boys. And Champ had seen me with the cops, when they're like humiliating them. So when Rodney says, 'You want to meet Champ?' I say, 'Well, I really would, but to tell the truth he's seen me with that unit and he probably thinks I'm a cop, so I don't think it's gonna be so cool.'

"And Rodney says, 'No, it's cool, Rich, I'll tell him, I'll *explain* it.' And you know, it's like four in the morning and we pull up to these projects and it's like the land that time forgot. There was this mist and these big high rises that looked like obelisks coming out of the mist. And there's Champ, this guy who's so big he's in three separate Zip Codes. And he's got all his boys with chains all around and cars are coming up and they're selling dope and there's no cops there. There won't be a cop around for the next twenty-four hours. It's complete impunity. There's nobody there from *my* world, you know. And Rodney is going, 'Oh, Rich, don't worry about it, you're with *me*, man.' "

As Rodney got out of the car to speak with Champ, Price says, he reminded him, "Now, Rodney, now wait a minute, don't *forget* to tell him who I am, you gotta say 'He's a *writer*, you might have *seen* him with the cops but he was only with them doing a *book*, he's not a cop himself.' And he's going, 'Don't worry, don't worry.' And I'm going, 'Oh shit,' I have this feeling he's not going to tell him *exactly* what he needs to know.

"And Rodney gets with the kid, Champ, and he puts his arm around him and they're walking off together and in a minute these two guys, it's like this prison shit: they're insulting each other and fake fistfighting and it's 'Yo! Why are you calling me a pimp, you fat motherfucker?' and they're hitting each other and they're like trying to fuck each other in the ass. I mean, this was all like saying *hello*, you know."

Price was having major misgivings about whether his introduction would be phrased right.

"It's not like Rodney is going to interrupt all this shit to say what I want him to say, you know, 'He's a writer, you saw him with the cops but he's *not* a cop.' And I'm sitting in the car all by myself and people are looking at me, but they're not going near me because I'm in Rodney's car. It's like 'Don't hit him until Rodney says it's O.K.'

"And about five minutes later this guy Champ comes loping out of the mist, a huge guy in a white shirt and big white baggy shorts coming through the mist like a two-legged dinosaur coming at you, and he's coming over to the car and he looks at me and his eyes kind of go, 'Oh shit, Rodney, you brought a motherfucking *cop!*' I figured Rodney told him, 'I'm with a writer and he's O.K.,' and *forgot* to explain about him seeing me with the cops. And this guy obviously thought I was pulling a fast one. And he's shouting, '*The motherfucker's a cop!*'

"And all the kids come running and their chains are jangling and they're loping toward me like they're doing an L. L. Cool J thing. And they're running towards me, I'm going, 'Oh my fucking ass,' and I don't see Rodney anymore. It's 'God, I can't believe this. Why am I doing this?' And then I have to get out of the car. I say, 'No no no, you don't understand. No, I'm a writer, *writer*. I'm making a movie, I'm making a book, I'm making a movie *and* a book, and Billy Dee Williams is gonna play Rodney and I wanted to meet you, because I'm not a cop, I don't even *like* those guys.'. And finally I got through. But some of these kids wanted to beat the shit out of me anyhow. So I didn't

stop talking and I had my novels in the car and I was holding up my novels, you know, it's like 'Look! Look! I'm a writer! I brought my novels!' "

It was a dicey situation but one that soon turned into a moment of truth as stark and brutal as a medieval morality play, so melodramatic Price kept it out of *Clockers* for fear of seeming to stretch the fabric of realism:

" 'You're making a movie about this thing?' Champ says to me. 'You want to know what it's *about?* You want to know what's happening around here?' He goes like this, snaps his fingers, and one of his boneheads comes over and gives him a clip, which is like ten little bottles of coke bound in a cylinder with a rubber band. 'It's about this,' he says. 'You want to see something?' He takes out one of these little bottles, you know, it was like a tenth of a gram. And some of these noddies are walking around in the mist, they're looking in the grass for like, you know, a bottle someone threw away with like a trace of residue in it.

"And Champ says to one of them, 'Yo—get *over* here!' And it's like 'Yo. What's up, Champ? What's up? What you want?' And he says, 'Stand over here, just stand here for a minute.' And he can see the bottle—it's like pay dirt. And Champ is looking around and he pulls over another guy and he says, 'Yo! Get over here.' And it's 'Yes, what's up, Champ? What's up?' He says, 'You go over there'—so they're facing each other. And Champ says, 'You two know each other?' And one guy says, 'Yes, we know each other, we grew up together.'

"And Champ says, 'I want you two guys to fight each other for this bottle.' And one of the guys starts saying, 'You know I ain't gonna hit my *man*.' BOOM! The other guy knocks him down, takes the bottle, and vanishes.

"And Champ says, '*That's* what this is about. I got me an *army* out there. These motherfuckers do *anything* for me.' "

That's what this is about. Price is fond of recalling a story about Stephen Crane, about the way the author of *The Red Badge of Courage* behaved when he was serving as a correspondent in Cuba during the Spanish-American War. "Crane would make a point when the bullets were flying of standing up and lighting his cigarette. And not getting down until he got it going properly."

Price doesn't regard Crane's showboating behavior as courage. He thinks "the guy had a *problem*—let's face it, he was overcompensating."

Price should know: he's got the same problem, he says. And he does seem to share a penchant for making himself a target for the sake of his art. Which *Clockers* will undoubtedly do. It has all the makings of a big book (Universal paid a budget-busting $1.9 million for the film rights and the screenplay—Scorsese to direct—while the novel was still in manuscript). And perhaps a big controversy.

There are those who will say that this is hubris, that no amount of overcompensation will suffice for a white novelist to succeed in writing—as Price does for a good half of *Clockers*—from inside the heads of the black denizens of ghetto housing projects.

Presumed Innocent author Scott Turow alludes to this obliquely in a generous pre-publication quote about *Clockers:* Turow calls it "remarkable, *The Bonfire of the Vanities* as rewritten by Nelson Algren," and adds that "it is a book of considerable bravery which refuses to declare the imagination out of bounds when it wanders onto terrain that others might wish to call forbidden."

While some are likely to say it's impossible, if not "forbidden," for a white writer to truly express the humanity of black people, others will undoubtedly say Price has transgressed by making his coke dealers and users *too* human, by humanizing rather than demonizing the perpetrators of crack-addict culture. Still others may object that he's humanized rather than demonized the casual racism of his white cops.

Of course, he's aware of all these objections, he's raised them himself. Nobody knows better than Price that writing a novel like *Clockers* is the equivalent of standing up in a cross fire and slowly and deliberately lighting up.

Which, you sense, is part of the appeal for Price. One of the cops he'd spent time with remarked that when they went on raids into hostile crack-house territory, "we kept telling him to stay in the car, but that skinny motherfucker would be running through the door with us"—the only one without a gun or a bulletproof vest.

"I mean, when I heard him say that," Price tells me, "I said, 'Wow. I did that?' I think of myself as a physical coward. It's all overcompensation. I mean, my family crest was like crossed thermometers on a field of aspirin," he says of the nervous, overprotective lower-middle-class Jewish family he was nurtured in, growing up in the Bronx projects. In addition, he had something more to compensate for than most kids: a childbirth accident left him with a right arm partially crippled from cerebral palsy. "The doctor was shooting speed and bungled the delivery," he says with what still sounds like some serious anger. It affects him to the extent he has to shake with his left hand. He reports that the Jersey cops he ran with called him "that Dustin Hoffman–looking motherfucker with the bad arm." (In fact, it's not Dustin Hoffman he reminds you of; the vibe, if not the literal resemblance, is more wired, more James Woods.)

It was overcompensation that compelled him to go where few straight men had dared venture before—into the wildest, baddest, most extreme underground gay sex bars in New York during the pre-AIDS frenzy of the late seventies, to accumulate experience for *Ladies' Man,* a brilliant novel about New York loneliness that had highbrow gay academic critic Martin Duberman calling it "the best gay book of the year" in 1978, despite its straight author.

The achievement was particularly impressive for Price, growing up as he did in a white working-class culture which was both homophobic and hostile to creative aspiration. Or as Price puts it, "Coming from where I did, it was like if you'd write a poem you'd probably suck a dick."

Where he came from was the Parkside Projects in the northeast Bronx, a city-built postwar housing project for blue-collar families both white and black. Price's father briefly owned a hosiery store, was a window dresser at Modell's discount department store, and drove a cab. "I was the first kid in my family to go to college and my parents were haunted by the Depression and it was like 'We work all our lives to send you to college and what do you want to do with your education, you want to be a *writer?* What are you, making *fun* of us?' "

So intimidated was he by the pressure to enter a *(Continued on page 162)*

Richard Nixon

(Continued from page 119) but during his séances with journalists he said he was dismayed by the new president's belligerence toward the Soviet Union and his obeisance to the Republican right: "You have to have them with you, but you can't let them dominate you." Nixon said he disagreed with Reagan's view that if government tackled a problem it would "screw it up." As for substance, Reagan could "talk an hour and a half and not say a hell of a lot."

Nixon's private criticism of Reagan from the left in the early 1980s was important in winning over many of those who had once been most opposed to him. By exalting Nixon, they could whipsaw Reagan: compared with the new president, Nixon seemed refreshingly reasonable and moderate, not to mention his private sagaciousness and superior intellect.

Among liberal journalists, he argued that his conservative label was something of a misnomer: witness the openings to the Soviet Union and China, his first-term domestic programs, and his indifference to the Reaganites' litmus-test issues such as gun control and abortion. Nixon now privately referred to himself as a "progressive" Republican: the word "moderate" suggested "that you don't believe in anything, that you just want to be on the go for what works, and I don't agree with that. I think you've got to have some beliefs and then make it work."

In the fall of 1978, Nixon had gone to Paris and Oxford, where he spoke before the Oxford Union. In May 1984, he made his first major Washington appearance since resigning—a foreign-policy speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors that was a great success. Fred Bruning of *Newsday* observed, "Here was a man only two years younger than Ronald Reagan who did not lose his way in mid-sentence or appear suddenly to lapse into private reverie." Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times* was not so charmed: "We forget so quickly in this country. And we have forgotten this man's endless offenses, petty and grand, against decency."

In San Francisco two years later, the American Newspaper Publishers Association gave Nixon a standing ovation. Asked about the lessons of Watergate, he evoked friendly laughter: "Just destroy all the tapes!" Katharine Graham of *The Washington Post* shook his hand for photographers and suggested to her *Newsweek* editors that they consider a story on Nixon's rehabilitation. When they duly asked Nixon for what was then a rare interview, Roger Stone laid down the ground rules: no questions on certain subjects, no tape recorder, no photographs inside the Nixon house—and Nixon must get the cover. Stone considered the result a "milestone" in Nixon's resurgence: in May 1986, the smiling former president appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* with the headline "He's Back: The Rehabilitation of Richard Nixon."

That year Ronald Reagan made his own surprise contribution to Nixon's rehabilitation: the Iran-contra affair. Nixon had encouraged Victor Lasky (*JFK: The Man and the Myth*) to write a book showing that he was not the first president to use tough methods. Lasky's *It Didn't Start with Watergate* was a national best-seller in 1977. For Nixon's partisans, Iran-contra showed that it didn't end with Watergate either. Some said that compared with the Reagan administration's subversion of congressional authority, Nixon's obstruction of justice seemed small potatoes. Others reasoned that Reagan had been spared Nixon's fate only because he was far more popular on Capitol Hill and because Congress lacked the stomach for another impeachment drive.

Reagan called Nixon for advice on how to handle the gathering storm. During Watergate, Nixon had tried to save himself by seeming indispensable in foreign relations. He advised Reagan to make a new push for a Soviet-U.S. summit and arms treaty in 1987. "It is not going to be another Watergate, as long as you stay ahead of the curve." He told Reagan to fire two or three of the people involved and then "change the subject."

On Watergate, Nixon pursued his own revisionism. In his 1990 book, *In the Arena: A Memoir of Victory, Defeat, and Renewal*, he suggested that the scandal was an outgrowth of the extraordinary measures he had had to take as president of a country at war both at home and in Vietnam. He wrote that his "central mistake" was "not taking a higher road than my predecessors and my adversaries."

Privately, Nixon gives some weight to his wife's suspicion that he may have been done in by some kind of intelligence conspiracy. He wonders whether he resigned too soon. Close friends and members of his family feel that White House aides, after nineteen brutal months of Watergate, were too eager to escape from their own ordeal and their suggestion that he resign was based more on exhaustion than on rational calculation of Nixon's ability to fight on.

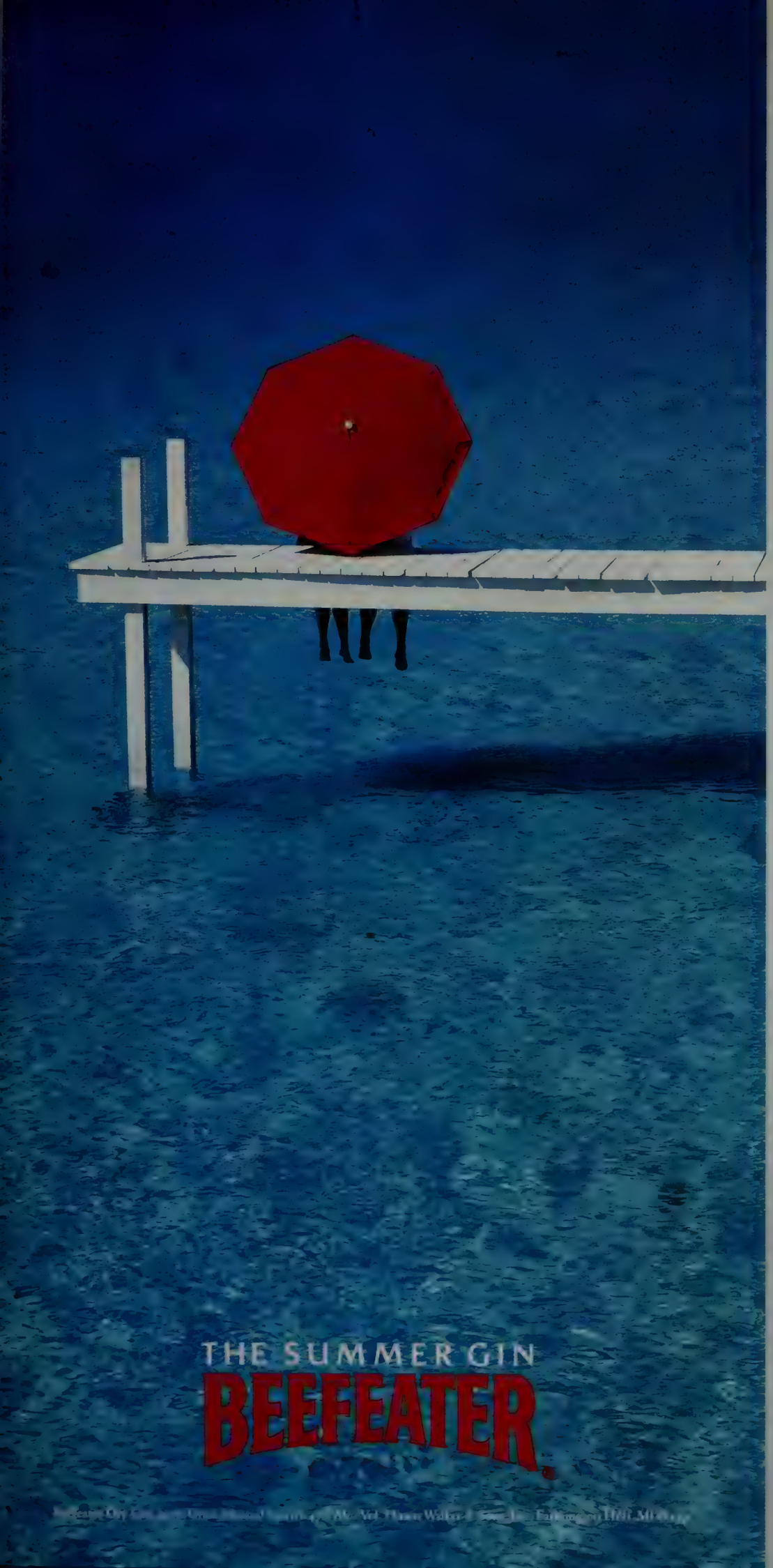
The former president has long believed that history is only "ripe" after fifty years. By then, he hopes, Watergate will be a historical "footnote." From the day of his resignation, he has worked to advance this aim by careful shaping of the historical record. He demanded that his presidential papers and four thousand hours of secretly recorded White House tapes be sent to him immediately. Gerald Ford's lawyers made a deal: the collection would be shipped to a National Archives center in California. Nixon's people would hold one key, Ford's the other. After five years, Nixon could destroy the entire archive, if he wished.

The deal was announced at the moment Ford pardoned Nixon. An outraged Congress repealed it and ordered the National Archives to impound the entire collection. Appeals by Nixon's lawyers to restore some version of the Ford agreement failed. Partially open, the collection now resides in an Alexandria, Virginia, warehouse.

During Nixon's first eclipse, in the 1960s, he grandiloquently compared himself to his heroes Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle, who had had their own spells in the "wilderness." (He briefly thought of writing a book about statesmen who had fought their way back.) In the 1980s, he presented himself as the guru of renewal. Nixon felt that Americans were "crazy" about the word. When he started to write *In the Arena*, he said that if he could let people see what he had been through and that he had recovered "at least in part," that might tell them that life wasn't over.

The result is a self-help guide for the defeated. Nixon's prescription is to think on a large scale. In private, he lampoons those who contemplate their own navels: "How do I feel about myself? Do I like myself? The media has a lot of it. . . . Instead of looking in the mirror, they ought to be looking out the window. . . . Unless you have goals beyond yourself, you're not going to live up to your capacity, and you're going to age prematurely."

The theme of renewal dominates the Richard Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, California, opened by Nixon, Ford, Reagan, and Bush in July 1990 with brass



PERHAPS THE

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AT ALL.



bands and ceremony. Before touring the exhibition hall, visitors sit down in an "orientation theater" to watch a biographical film. (One Nixon Library official says, "If this doesn't erase any anti-Nixon sentiments in them, nothing will.") At the start, the narrator speaks of Nixon's "remarkable recovery" since 1974, his "astonishing renewal," the "new appreciation" of his "lasting achievements." Flashing back to 1947, the voice tells us that friends warned the young congressman that the Alger Hiss case would ruin him, "but he wouldn't give up." After he was defeated in 1962, "everyone thought he was through," but "hard work, careful planning, and shrewd instincts brought him back from oblivion."

The motion picture includes an excerpt from Nixon's tearful farewell to his staff before leaving the White House by helicopter. (When the president declares on-screen, "It is only a beginning, always," a choked-up Yorba Linda tourist cries out, "It's true!") The narrator goes on, "He was in his deepest valley, but he would not stay there for long." Images flash onto the screen of Nixon's meetings with foreign leaders, the *Newsweek* cover.

At the end of the film, Nixon stares into the camera: "What advice do I have for young people? Never, never give up. . . . If you take no risks, you will suffer no defeats. But if you take no risks, you will have no victories."

In retirement, Nixon has periodically honored the more compassionate side of his nature that moved him while president to write Hubert Humphrey after he lost the 1972 nomination and to call Edward Kennedy's namesake son when he lost a leg to cancer. Aside from the charity of the gesture, he knew this kind of thing would soften his old reputation for relentlessness toward enemies. He sent his books *Real Peace* and *Leaders* with friendly notes to George McGovern, whom he had once reviled for equating him with Hitler. In January 1984, while running again for the Democratic presidential nomination, McGovern called on Nixon in New York. Nixon praised his old foe for saying what he believed "rather than pleasing the crowd."

Another old rival with whom Nixon's relationship grew warmer with each retelling was John F. Kennedy. After Kennedy's murder, some schoolchildren who remembered the 1960 televised debates thought of Nixon as "President Kennedy's friend." Linked forever to Kennedy in the public mind, Nixon endowed their often bitter contest with elements of romantic legend. Before audiences, he noted that when "Jack Kennedy and I" arrived in Congress in 1947 both endorsed a bipartisan foreign policy. The Nixon Library displays the two men's correspondence under the heading "RN and JFK: Friendly Rivals."

After years of noncommunication, the former president began sending copies of his books to figures like his C.I.A. director, Richard Helms, and John Ehrlichman, who presumably know stories that would not enhance the record of the thirty-seventh presidency. Nixon also kept up with John Connally, who ultimately fell not through political scandal but through personal bankruptcy. He is inspired by Connally's "irrepressible, optimistic attitude" and the stout support of his wife, Nellie. The lesson of Connally's travails? "Never sign a note for a friend."

Like Garbo, Nixon has always understood the benefits of public mystery, telling aides, "People want what they can't get." He points to Gerald Ford as a perfect example of a former president overexposed. According to Roger Stone, after Jeane Kirkpatrick left the U.N., Nixon advised her, "Don't accept every invitation. Don't answer every press call. Don't grant every interview. Reserve your comments for a time when you have something important to say, and you'll find that they clamor for your views."

For Nixon, one corollary of this rule is to make a virtue of the fact that he is not just another ex-president. Watergate has endowed him with a mystique that would be absent had he finished off his two terms without incident. Knowing this, he has striven to preserve his singularity. In 1985, the Reagan staff made noises about bringing Nixon, Ford, and Carter to the White House to advise the president before his first summit with Mikhail Gorbachev. Cagily, Nixon had his staff find out which dates Carter and Ford would be unavailable. Then he offered those dates as the only ones on which he could come to Washington.

But like the man who wants to join any club that would not have him as a member, Nixon grows indignant when he feels excluded. In 1988, Ford and Carter created a blue-chip panel to draft policy recommendations for the next president under the title "The American Agenda." Some of the Democratic members said that they would bolt if Nixon were invited to join. A rule was instantly invented: the commission would include only the two ex-presidents most recently in office. After George Bush's election, the report was ready. Ford asked, "Don't you think we should send a copy to Nixon?" The document went to New Jersey. A vituperative letter came back from a Nixon aide denouncing the exclusion of the president most noted for his foreign policy. Brent Scowcroft, a panel member who had once served on Nixon's staff, read it and chuckled, "No doubt about it! They're Nixon's words."

Hoping that their report would be widely publicized, Ford and Carter delivered it to Bush at the White House. But Nixon had the last laugh. He chose the same day to call on vice president–elect Dan Quayle. That evening's news was dominated not by Bush's meeting with Ford and Carter but by Nixon's encounter with Quayle.

In 1988, Nixon knew better than to test his public acceptance by asking to speak to the Republican National Convention. He wrote party managers that he was "declining all invitations for political appearances this year."

George Bush was virtually Nixon's last choice for president. After Bush's election, Nixon remained an offstage presence. At a private dinner in December 1989, the Democratic lawyer Robert S. Strauss (now ambassador to Moscow) asked Nixon what Bush should do about General Manuel Noriega. Nixon, who did not know that American troops were already flying toward Panama City, said, "The way I look at Noriega, he's a pimple. It's very ugly and very irritating, but in removing the pimple we don't want to leave a scar, a permanent scar on the body of Central America."

After the invasion, Nixon cautioned U.S. officials to think seriously before doing it again. He compared Bush's expulsion of Noriega to Kennedy's role in deposing Ngo Dinh Diem in Saigon: once the United States changed the leadership of another country it had to take "responsibility for what happens."

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, Nixon was privately skeptical that Bush could persuade the country and the Congress to go to war. As Bush labored to push twelve resolutions through the U.N., Nixon was impressed with the president's horse-trading skills, but baf-

fled that he would spend so much time and political credit to ensure that world opinion viewed a Persian Gulf war as just. He worried about Bush's sensitivity to polls and the media. Ruefully, he noted that Bush had "five televisions" in the study in his second-floor private quarters. At least, he said, this was better than L.B.J., who had them "even in the bathroom."

In December 1990, Bush called Nixon to report that he was considering military action against Saddam. On Christmas Day, Nixon finished a twenty-six-page memo to the president. According to a White House aide, it praised Bush for his handling of the crisis and endorsed the use of force, if necessary. One problem Nixon perceived was that since Saddam Hussein was a "bullshitter" who issued hollow threats, he assumed the same of other world leaders.

In March 1991, Nixon traveled to Moscow, along with Nixon Library director John H. Taylor and Dimitri Simes of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Simes was a Soviet foreign-policy expert who had emigrated to the United States during Nixon's presidency. When he wrote a *Christian Science Monitor* article in 1982 praising Nixon's courage and integrity, Nixon wrote him a thank-you note saying that Simes's liberal Carnegie colleagues would probably not be very happy with it. Not long after Gorbachev's ascension, in 1985, Simes called on Nixon at his suite in the One Washington Circle hotel (which, as one Nixon friend has noted, is equidistant from the White House and the Watergate complex). Nixon doubted that the new Soviet leader would "go all the way" and shed the Communist Party. He was impressed by Gorbachev's style, "but one shouldn't judge leaders by style."

During a later visit to Nixon's New York office, Simes was concerned about catching the 3:30 shuttle back to Washington. Nixon said, "Don't worry. You still have twenty minutes. My driver will take you." Simes was astonished when Nixon rode along with him to the airport to avoid breaking off their conversation.

In Moscow, Nixon called on hard-line K.G.B. chairman Vladimir Kryuchkov, who told him, "We have had as much democratization as we can stomach." Kryuchkov said that there was still a fundamental conflict between American and Soviet interests around the world. (At that moment Kryuchkov was pondering the coup against Gorbachev.)

When Nixon saw Gorbachev, he was startled by the transformation since their first Moscow meeting, in 1986. The Soviet leader seemed discouraged, defensive, exhausted. Gorbachev insisted that despite his moves toward a hard line he was still a reformer. Citing the old talk about a "new Nixon," he said he was still "the old Gorbachev."

Nixon was not convinced. At a private White House luncheon with Bush, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, and other foreign-policy officials, Nixon conceded that Boris Yeltsin was "not as smart" as Gorbachev, "not as polished," but insisted that the Russian leader was more durably committed to democratic values. Three months later, for the first time, Yeltsin called on Bush in the Oval Office. After the August coup that spelled the death of the Soviet Union, Simes and Taylor talked to the former president about staging a Nixon Library conference in Washington on new priorities in foreign policy. Perhaps the sessions would one day lead to a new think tank, the Richard Nixon Center. Nixon gave them a green light.

To serve as chairman, Simes recruited his Carnegie colleague James Schlesinger, who was Nixon's last secretary of defense. Schlesinger's history with Nixon was clouded. In 1974, before Nixon's final summit with Leonid Brezhnev, he prodded the president to take a tougher arms-control line. When Nixon said that it had "no chance whatever of being accepted," Schlesinger advised him to use on Brezhnev the same "forensic ability" he had once used on Nikita Khrushchev. Nixon was furious: he felt that had it not been for Watergate Schlesinger would never have issued such an open challenge. During Nixon's final days, when some speculated that the president might pull down the temple around him, Schlesinger ordered that any military command by Nixon be countersigned by the secretary of defense.

The conference was set for mid-March 1992, co-sponsored by the Illinois agricultural-processing firm Archer Daniels Midland. In the circularity of history, A.D.M.'s chief, Dwayne O. Andreas, had given $25,000 in 1972 to Kenneth H. Dahlberg, Nixon's midwestern finance chairman. Unknown to Andreas, the money found its way into the hands of the Watergate burglars. Nixon discussed it on the fatal June 23 tape ("Who the hell is Ken Dahlberg?"). Thus, the unwitting agent of Nixon's downfall became the witting agent of his rehabilitation.

Aided by Nixon's old lobbyist friend Robert Keith Gray of Hill and Knowlton, Schlesinger sent out hundreds of invitations to Nixon-administration alumni and much of the foreign-policy establishment, which had once eyed Nixon so warily. Schlesinger wrote to Scowcroft, now White House national-security adviser, asking Bush to deliver the principal address at the Wednesday-night banquet. Plagued by Pat Buchanan's challenge in the early Republican primaries, the president would make no firm commitment. Taylor and Simes raised the matter with Nixon, who was worried about seeming to pressure Bush, or being turned down.

Finally, Nixon's daughter Julie wrote to Bush. On Monday, March 2, the president accepted. Telephones in Simes's and Taylor's offices began ringing off the hook. Bush and Scowcroft assigned Richard Haass of the National Security Council staff to draft a major address.

Nixon planned to return the president's kindness. He invited Patrick Buchanan to his New Jersey office in late March and said, "You and I disagree totally on foreign policy, so let's talk about politics." Nixon told him that his campaign had made its point. It was time to leave Bush alone: "If you want to be a serious candidate in 1996, you're hurting yourself." Buchanan thanked his old chieftain for the advice, but said he would stay in the race.

Someone once observed that when Nixon makes a move, what counts is not where the billiard ball first strikes but the carom. During the same week that Bush agreed to speak at the Nixon Library dinner, Nixon sent out his "confidential" memo charging that American aid to Yeltsin's Russia was "penny ante...pathetically inadequate." If Yeltsin failed, people would ask, "Who lost Russia?"

Nixon mailed the memo to friends and foreign-policy analysts across the country. Shrewd to the end, he let it be known that the document had gone out to the fifty people interested in foreign affairs whom he believed most capable of affecting public policy. This gave recipients the sense that they were on Nixon's A list. In fact the memo went out to many more.

The day before the Nixon Library conference, the front page of *The New York Times* heralded Nixon's break with Bush over aid to the former Soviet republic. The story led three network newscasts. Some in Nixon's circle were aghast.

Richard Nixon

They worried that Bush would perceive the memo as ingratitude at the very moment he had agreed to be the first president to speak at a Nixon-sponsored event in Washington. One columnist says, "Nixon knew perfectly well that the 'pathetically inadequate' line would generate exactly the kind of press coverage it got: it would make him look good, make Bush look bad, and generally serve his larger purpose."

Before a meeting of Republican leaders, Bush uncomfortably told reporters that he and Nixon were in "total agreement"—an astounding statement, since the memo was a blast at his policy. The president went on to say that there were "certain fiscal financial constraints on what we can do." He said he did not take Nixon's memo as "personally critical, and I think he would reiterate that it wasn't."

On Wednesday, March 11, at noon, in the ballroom of the Four Seasons Hotel in Washington, a long row of television lights was switched on. Hundreds rose to their feet from their luncheon tables as the grinning former president strode in from a rear exit, shaking hands up the entire length of the room. An elevator operator said, "He's looking old."

Pat Nixon was absent. Only twice since 1974 has she joined her husband for a public ceremony. Once was the opening of the Nixon Library. At the other, the Reagan Library's opening in November 1991, she collapsed out of camera range. Someone called for President Bush's physician. Protectively Nixon swept his wife into their car, saying, "No doctors!"

Now the former president took his place at the table nearest the dais. Sitting next to him was the former U.S. chief justice Warren Burger. Appointed by Nixon, he had nonetheless written the Supreme Court opinion demanding the White House tapes and sealing Nixon's doom. At the next table was Richard Helms, whose C.I.A. Nixon had tried to use as a scapegoat during Watergate. Elsewhere in the room were even a few names from the Nixon White House "enemies list," such as Daniel Schorr, once of CBS. The Washington columnist Charles Krauthammer observed, "The statute of limitations on Watergate has run out."

After a luncheon of corn bisque and grilled salmon, Nixon rose. With his left hand in his trouser pocket, using no notes or lectern, Nixon delivered his thirty-five-minute plea for aid to Russia, omitting the scathing references to Bush. Henry Kissinger later told a friend that his old boss wrote out such addresses on a yellow pad, memorized them, and rehearsed them before a mirror.

That evening, George and Barbara Bush, wearing formal dress, were driven over from the White House. As Richard Helms observed, the president and Nixon "passed the loving cup." Of the guest of honor, Bush declared, "I value his advice today. I get it. I appreciate it." As Nixon nodded fiercely, the president denounced "isolationism" and "protectionism": "Turning our back on the world is no answer. I don't care how difficult are our economic problems at home."

One member of the audience, Julie Nixon Eisenhower, said, "We couldn't be sure this day would come. But I never stopped believing."

On April 1, Bush announced a large new aid package for the former Soviet Union. That same day, John Hockenberry reported on National Public Radio that Richard Nixon, "whose political star has been ascending," had just made an announcement in New York. Listeners heard the familiar voice saying that having taken "the longest and hardest road" from "oblivion" and "won back your confidence" he was asking his fellow Americans once again to "make me your president."

It was all an April Fools' joke, with Nixon's voice supplied by the impressionist Rich Little, but many of those who enthusiastically called in did not know that. T-shirts appeared in Washington novelty stores: HE'S TANNED, HE'S RESTED, HE'S READY: NIXON IN '92.

Ronald Reagan once said of John Kennedy that only in the twilight of battle was it possible to see the splendor of the colors on the other side of the field. In 1992, many Americans feel the same way about Nixon. Two decades after Watergate, they appear to value more than at any time since 1972 Nixon's intellect, depth, creativity, and tenaciousness.

According to a *Vanity Fair* poll by Yankelovich Clancy Shulman, Richard Nixon has come a long way. The poll, conducted by telephone among four hundred respondents between March 27 and 29, shows that, while 71 percent believe that Nixon's actions warranted his resignation, 66 percent feel his views should be "respected and taken seriously as the thinking of an elder statesman." Asked whether the former president should be excluded from any formal position in the U.S. government, 63 percent of the respondents say he shouldn't be.

The poll suggests the degree to which the Iran-contra affair may have affected Americans' view of Watergate. Asked which of the two scandals was worse, 42 percent say Iran-contra, 40 percent Watergate. The poll shows them just as divided (47 to 49) on whether the country should "forgive and forget" Nixon's actions.

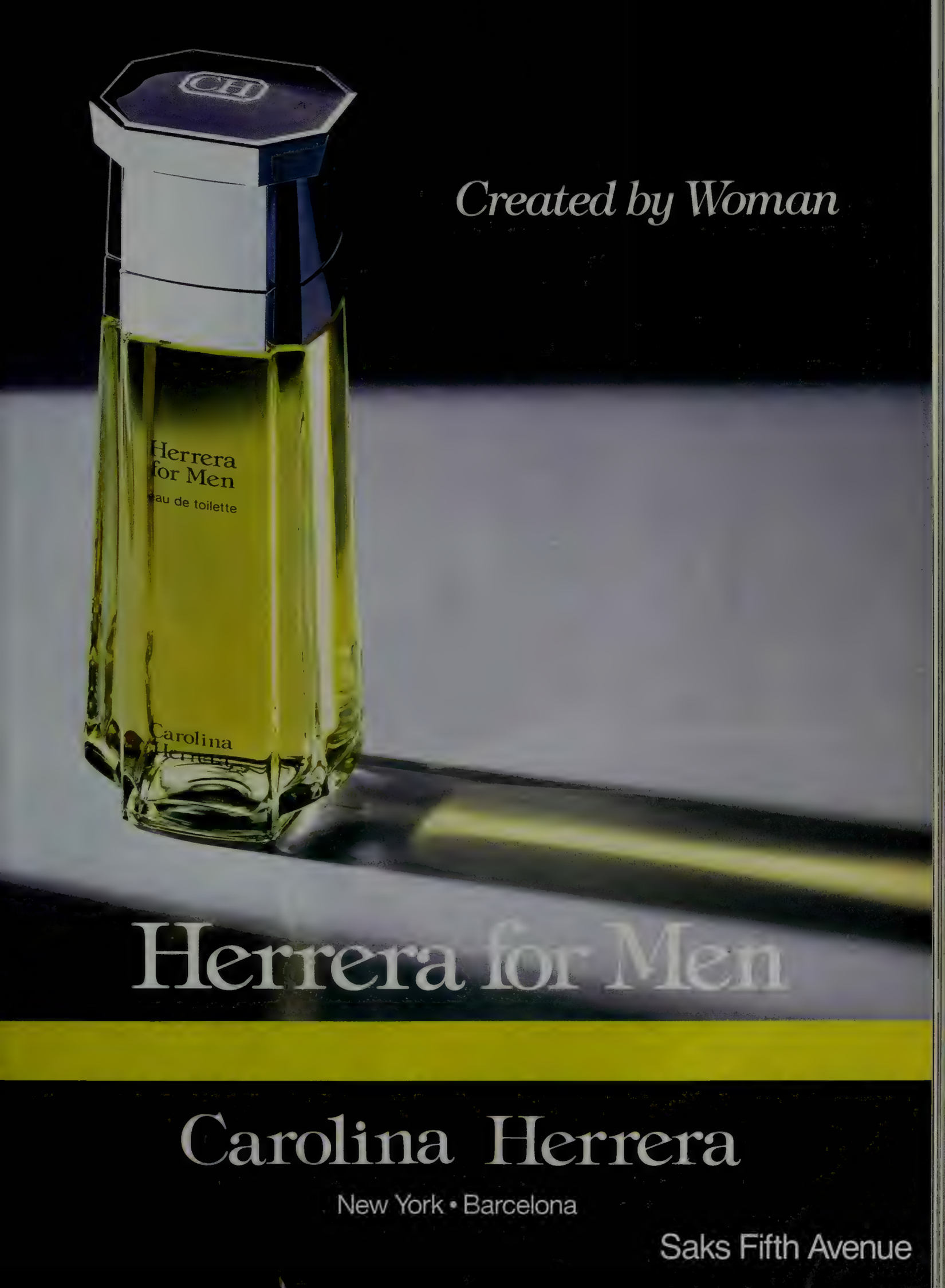
Sixty-nine percent consider the former president a "tough negotiator," 64 percent an expert on politics and foreign affairs. Fifty-two percent say that Nixon has a "clear vision" of America's world role. Forty-eight percent consider the former president "underrated." Thirty-six percent believe that he did a good or excellent job as president.

Poignantly for Nixon, this victory may prove to have been Pyrrhic. From time to time in recent years, despite the vigorous efforts of Nixon's lawyers and the slowness of transcription and processing, the National Archives has released snippets of his White House papers and tapes that sweep back the curtain for a peep at the private, vengeful Nixon of old.

The transcripts of forty-seven hours of tapes released in June 1991, for example, show Nixon suggesting to H. R. Haldeman that the Teamsters Union could be used to break up anti-war demonstrations: "They, they've got guys who'll go in and knock their heads off." Haldeman replies, "Sure, murderers, guys that really—you know, that's what they really do." At another point, Nixon asks, "Aren't the Chicago Seven all Jews?" He refers to his own supporters as "the finance contributors and all those assholes."

Nixon began making these recordings in 1971, so that his presidential library could one day present an edited version that would show the thirty-seventh president making the great decisions of peace and war. Thanks to Congress and the courts, the remaining 3,900 hours of tape will instead someday be released in full.

Every president says things in the seclusion of the Oval Office that he is not proud of. This is probably more true of Nixon than most. His private talk will be revealed in a way that no other president has ever had to endure, or no doubt ever will. Historians will set the tapes in context, but the cumulative effect of this material will almost certainly be another massive assault on the public perception of the thirty-seventh president. No one must be more aware than Richard Milhous Nixon that his "final comeback" could well turn out to have been merely the moment before the deluge. □


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The Annette Effect

(Continued from page 122) best voice in the world, the best body, the best face, and the best appreciation of a joke. I defy anyone to leave the room when she's laughing.

"She has the education, the training, for what she does. She's flexible and principled at the same time." Here he draws breath. "And I'm just getting started. I try constantly to study the chemistry, the factors, that have gone into the creation of such an...American *Übermensch*. How it happened, how a person could be so gifted, and normal at the same time. But I have to tell you, I'm stumped."

Many are. Mike Nichols offers, "She's confusing because she's perfect. Her kindness is perfect, her technique is perfect, her relaxation is perfect." Irwin Winkler, for whom she played a loyal ex-wife to Robert De Niro in *Guilty by Suspicion*, asks, "Can anyone be that nice and that talented and still be real?" "It must be something to do with American class that I don't understand," says Stephen Frears. "When I met her parents, I thought they were going to horsewhip me for taking her clothes off in *The Grifters*. They were terribly nice. Her mother was wonderful—a very tough woman, but great. Someday she'll play her mother, and it'll be her great performance."

Annette Bening Beatty, born in 1958, is the fourth child of a couple who met in Iowa, moved to Topeka and then to Wichita, Kansas, and on to San Diego when Annette was seven. Her father was in insurance, a manager who taught Dale Carnegie's "5 Great Rules of Selling" course for thirty years. (The five steps of the selling process are Attention, Interest, Conviction, Desire, Close.) Her mother was, and still is, a paid soloist in church. They have been married for forty-two years, and had four children in five years.

Annette was good in school, took up ballet at twelve, and gave it up at thirteen so that she would have time to play. She saw *Two Gentlemen of Verona* at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego; struck by how accessible the language was, and delighted that the trees were played by actors, she decided to be an actress. Her path into theater was a natural succession of drama classes, the first taught by Ann Krill at Patrick Henry High School; Krill, whose voice is startlingly like that of her pupil, used the methods of the Living Theatre's Julian Beck in her classes, which must have taken San Diego aback. "We did transformations—learning how to transform on impulse," says Krill. "Annette's so pretty, and at the same time digs very deep, operates on an intuitive level, where consciously she can't quite put into words what she's able to do."

She graduated from high school early, and spent a year working as a cook on a boat that took fishing parties out from San Diego, so that she could scuba-dive. Her boss on the boat, Bill Johnston, when asked about her, says, "I'd only remember her if her cooking was bad." He adds that his crews are "the prime of American youth, fun-loving, healthy, energetic people." Some of that California master-race aura still clings to her, as when she describes Thornton Wilder as "a northeastern, intellectual, complicated person."

She fell in love a lot—once with "a wonderful guy who was a deckhand." She liked "real guys." Her first heartbreak occurred when she was twenty, on the closing night of a play she was in at Mesa College. "A few weeks before, I must have known something was cracking, because I went to the bookstore and bought books about love and relationships—what to do about issues of love. I drove over to his house after the play, and that's when he told me. It was really really hard, and I was grateful to my mother because she was never patronizing about it; she really took it seriously. He was very very bright and intellectual, and also a real man's man. Independent and terrific. I was absolutely crazy about him. I'm a very emotional person, and it devastated me."

She was at that time learning the difference between feeling emotion and showing it onstage. The first lesson was to dissociate tension from emotion. "I gave a terrific scream at the end of *The Good Woman of Setzuan*, and all the muscles in my back went into total spasm, because I was all wrapped up in the feeling. I was still acting from instinct. Young actors are always stiff; you have to learn how to be fluid and facile and still express great emotion."

"She commands the stage with complete relaxation," says Mike Nichols, "and there's only one way to have that—it's to be onstage year after year in a thousand plays. Annette, with her innate practicality, went and did it."

"The size of emotions in the classics is limitless, infinite," says Bening, who, when asked to name her idols, comes up with Eva Le Gallienne and Eleonora Duse. "So you have a chance to explore great emotion within this perfect literature. The stories are so rich that when you approach modern material it's a little like you've run the marathon and now they're asking you to run the half-marathon."

After Mesa College she went to San Francisco State, where she studied acting, and on to the American Conservatory Theater. One of four students to go to New York to do a showcase for agents and producers, she refused all New York offers and returned to A.C.T., where she played Lady Macbeth, Laurel in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, Juliet, Emily in *Our Town*, small parts and big parts, for three years. "The older actresses would get terrified, because it seemed unfair that someone her age should be so self-assured," says Dakin Matthews, who worked with her. "As a classical actress working in verse, she has the ability to make the words sound real." Larry Hecht, who directed her in *Fifth of July* and a play about incest called *The Dolly*, says she showed "a depth and a spirit that are part of a unique take on something. She has an ability to add depth to even the most mundane characters."

As a child she had "managed to hide anything that would hurt my parents," and when she lived with her boyfriend at San Francisco State, she hid that too. "They really did raise me with a strong sense of what was good and what was bad. Anything outside of their very structured world was unknown, so I began to learn what felt right."

She met Steven White, an actor and director who has since become a fight choreographer of some renown, at A.C.T., began to live with him in 1981, and was married to him in the most traditional manner, wearing her mother's long white wedding dress, in San Diego in 1984, with a party across the street from Sea World. The following year they moved to Denver to work at the Colorado Shakespeare Festival. "I always felt more ill at ease outside of a city than in one. In Denver I'd look out the window, and there was no one walking around, and it always gave me the creeps."

From the living-room window in Warren Beatty's house, one of the many windows that look out over the varied aridities of the San Fernando Valley, you could see a huge bird circling low over a canyon. "It's a red-tailed hawk," said Annette. "They're very common around here. They nest in conspicuous places—the highest eucalyptus tree in the middle of a canyon." The Beatty house is not conspicuous, but it is high, perched on a crest between Beverly Hills and the Valley. Annette Bening is not conspicuous at all; she has long, beautifully shaped arms



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The Annette Effect

and legs, and smooth, faintly tanned skin. Her blue eyes are set wide apart in a wide, round face, and her reddish-brown hair, which grows from a widow's peak, is pulled back into an elastic. It's a face that can look young and unformed; on-screen in *Valmont* and *The Grifters*, her smiles made the face triangular, but those kinds of smiles are for work; her real grin splits the face in half. "Annette would come onto the set, and I wouldn't know who she was," says Stephen Frears. "Then she'd get dressed and turn into this dazzling beauty." Which she was at the Oscars this year, in a simple long navy-blue Armani dress, with her hair swept up in an aristocratic do. The look was elegant and restrained, confident.

When she decided to move to New York in 1986, she found that she didn't know how to go to interviews for movie parts. "I was from theater, and didn't know how to dress. I didn't feel secure just being myself; I didn't know what it meant. You're trained to be this neutral person. Who I am isn't important; what is important is if you hand me the script and I can act it. I thought I'd just do regional theater all my life.

"In theater, part of your ability, your tool, is you don't have to face yourself and how you really are. You can imagine yourself to be short or tall or thin or fat, blonde or black-haired, with a cane, with a mustache, with high heels. You can use your imagination about how you look to feed your behavior. You delude yourself purposefully. In film there is no lie. *Oh! That's what my face does when I'm feeling that?* I'm very critical when I see myself on film."

Michael Weller, in whose play *Spoils of War* she appeared Off Broadway—after her tremendous success in *Coastal Disturbances*—remarks that "she has an incredible lack of specificity, in the most mysterious and captivating way. You're always waiting for her to come into focus." And indeed, at home, her presence is that of a loving trajectory from the baby, Kathlyn, six weeks old, who lies sleeping on a semicircular couch that hugs a high bow window, to the sofa where she sits to talk, to the remarkably stocked kitchen, out into the solarium to get a blanket, and back to Kathlyn. "She's quite baby-drunk," Tina Howe had said. Her clothes are practical: leggings on her long legs, a gray-and-black-striped Tibetan tunic one day, a white shirt another, a striped sweater. The jewelry she wears is modest: a carnelian ring, purchased at a flea market in northern France during *Valmont*, on the index finger of her left hand; on the right ring finger, a turquoise set in silver, a gift from a boy—not a boyfriend—in high school. The house is designed, the actress is not.

It had been the house of Lauritz Melchior, the tenor—amusing in light of the fact that Bugsy Siegel purchased *his* house from the unwilling hands of the opera singer Lawrence Tibbett. Melchior was long dead when Beatty bought the concrete Art Deco building and began tearing it down, redesigning it over years, raising the roof, building a baby room next to the master bedroom, and creating suites at opposite ends of the house so that nobody would get in anyone's way. He added a solarium, a curved slice between two glass walls, like a decompression chamber to a greenhouse. Its convex side faces southwest, toward a perfectly oval pool framed by dark and somewhat mournful German-Romantic trees, so that the sunset over the Pacific seen through the vista has the dark, cautionary flavor of a Caspar David Friedrich allegory. In the main room, a soaring, open space, there are three banquettes along the windows, and one sofa with its back to the room, all covered in white velvet chenille. Two glass coffee tables, a carved oak cradle from her family, and a grand piano on which a bronze dancer executes a bow; a pair of ugly forties veneered armchairs with the smell of art direction about them; bare walls. A flowering cactus plant sits in a basket next to a photograph of Frances Perkins, the secretary of labor under Franklin Roosevelt, a joke gift from friends ("the only woman, they said, who was in labor longer than I was," says Bening); a phalaenopsis rises from a coffee table, and out in the solarium, an extravagant arrangement of striped tulips and gray leaves tumbles from a weathered urn, the gift of the Italian designer Valentino. On a chaise longue next to it is a blue baby car seat, and on a further chaise longue is a crumpled pink-and-white baby blanket.

A table behind the sofa holds books: the collected letters and speeches of John Reed, Mark Helprin's *A Soldier of the Great War*, *Mother Goose Songbook*, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, and large picture books of Egon Schiele, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, and Matisse's *Jazz*. A red book in Cyrillic type proves impenetrable. On the cover, I decipher something-*nora*, something-*ina*.

A din of blending, pounding, and slapping has echoed through the house as the cook, a young woman in a flower-printed T-shirt, prepared dishes for future consumption. "Hungry?" inquires Annette, and leads me to the kitchen. She holds open one of the silver doors of the refrigerator and rattles off the contents as splendidly complete dishes covered in transparent wrap are revealed on the shelves. "Carrots, celery, melon, berries, barbecued chicken, chicken salad, tuna salad, green salad, smoked salmon"—this last on a small plate with a bowl of cream cheese and slices of black bread at the ready. She pulls open the other door. "Anything to drink? Soda, plain water, breast milk? Yes, mine—that's in case I want to go out. Lemonade, bread pudding—excellent and totally not fattening . . ."

In the six weeks since the birth of Kathlyn she has lost thirty pounds, seemingly without effort. "Chips, cookies, crackers, dried fruit, nuts, cereals?"

Salad and Triscuits. Back in the living room, Kathlyn sits on her lap, beaming at her, tiny long hands grabbing, pincerlike, Annette's fingers. "At this age they have to sit there if you're kissing them, and they can't do anything about it," she says in a low hum. The baby appears to be focusing, and turns to smile at me. She has wise blue eyes, no eyebrows, faintly reddish hair, though not yet much of it. When she lies on her mother's stomach, they dissolve into the same entity, differentiated only by the color of their clothes. Bening is in a dreamy state. She always wanted a child. During *Coastal Disturbances*, says Tina Howe, "she had to be tied down whenever a little child toddled into view. If you've had a happy childhood, you want to reproduce it."

Unprompted, Bening starts to talk about a recent dream. "I was showing someone around one of my old neighborhoods in San Diego, and I was saying this was where my friend Annette—I had a friend called Annette, she was the daughter of Jehovah's Witnesses, and in the dream I was looking at the house she lived in, and saying, 'I wonder where she is now,' and the house was being sold. . . . Interesting."

At their lunch in the pizza parlor, she had been impressed by Warren, but "I didn't have any particular . . . moment, or anything." James Toback, the screenwriter and director who wrote the script for *Bugsy*, met her briefly after the lunch. His impression was "of an extremely well-sculpted, well-organized personality whose owner knew exactly how to project it. Warren said, *Wrrrrrrr*, like an animal

There are plenty of reasons to fight underage drinking.

Here's how we're doing it.

At Anheuser-Busch we're committed to putting an end to underage drinking. That's why we have developed, or help to support, comprehensive programs to tackle the problem. They're all based on providing the education and awareness that young people need for responsible behavior and decision making.



♦ *Family talk about drinking.*

Experts agree that it is important for parents to discuss drinking with their children at a young age to help prevent underage drinking. Our Family Talk brochures, prepared with the help of professionals in alcohol education, child psychology and family counseling, provide parents with useful discussion guides to help them answer questions and cover important points with their children. For copies, just call 1-800-359-TALK.

♦ *National Collegiate Athletic Association Foundation.*

Along with The National Collegiate Athletic Association Foundation, we provide alcohol education grants through their "Choices" Program. It encourages NCAA colleges, universities and conferences to develop, implement and evaluate campus-wide alcohol education programs that work toward the elimination of underage drinking and promotes education designed to enable the students to make informed choices about their lives.

♦ *BACCHUS.*

Established on over 500 college and university campuses throughout North America, BACCHUS is an international student organization devoted to providing proactive alcohol education programming at a peer to peer level. Through the development of year-round education initiatives, BACCHUS students promote responsible decision-making, healthy lifestyles and encourages respect for the law and campus drinking policies.

♦ *Program ID.*

We sponsored this booklet to help retailers enforce drinking age laws. It provides prototypes of drivers' licenses from all 50 states to help verify the authenticity of ID's when presented.



♦ *Barbara Babb Lecture Series.*

Some young people may believe that the consequences of underage or excessive drinking will occur to somebody else, never to them. Barbara Babb, R.N. and former critical care flight nurse, dispels that myth in her provocative presentation entitled "Tying One On." She has made a lasting impression on over a quarter of a million high school students across the country. Her program gets underage kids to think hard about what they could be doing to themselves and their loved ones if they drink.



Programs like these are working. Underage drinking is on the decline. According to a study by the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, drinking among high school seniors has dropped 21% since 1978, and is now at its lowest level since the study began in 1975. Over that same time, the number of drivers killed in teenage drunk driving accidents has decreased by 40% as reported by the U.S. Department of Transportation. It's progress, but there's a lot more work to do.

At Anheuser-Busch, we feel that education and awareness are the best tools to fight underage drinking. We will continue to support these programs and develop new ones to help make underage drinking a thing of the past.

Anheuser-Busch, Inc.

We invite you to share your thoughts on the issues mentioned here. We would also be happy to send you information regarding our policies and programs designed to encourage responsible drinking. Write: Anheuser-Busch, Inc., Consumer Awareness and Education, One Busch Place, St. Louis, MO 63118

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roar of approval and enthusiasm. There was a sense from the beginning of her being special in his life. He sort of knew right away—he doesn't get excited that often. Superficially excited, yes, but not seriously excited. I thought, This is going to amount to something, but didn't think necessarily in that form that quickly. He's the last person in the world to get involved lightly; to get past the initial superficial stages with somebody, there have to be layers of justification for that person. He has to admire her and like her and trust her and think she's exceptional and knows how to handle herself."

Here we might contrast, to illustrate something about different societies, the basic rules of show business and of civilian life. Show business, as enunciated by Toback, goes thus: "Once an actor introduces an actress and is playing opposite her, you allow that to take its own stage, because you want The Most to take place, whether they end up involved sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or just cinematically, so that you always try to give them their centrality. Let them feel they're the center of attention."

Dale Carnegie, in his *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, published in 1936, gives the seven rules for making your home life happier: (1) Don't nag. (2) Don't try to make your partner over. (3) Don't criticize. (4) Give honest appreciation. (5) Pay little attentions. (6) Be courteous. (7) Read a good book on the sexual side of marriage.

An old Hollywood hand sums up the dynamic between Beatty and Bening this way: "She came to him with great reviews, she's a nice girl and a good audience. He anointed her."

Warren Beatty, wearing thick tweed trousers despite the heat and throwing on a black jacket of such impeccable leather that the animal it came from may never have walked, passes through the house, remarking, as he looks at the plants in the living room, "There's too much clutter here." It must be said the compact discs are filed next to the fireplace in drawers that slide out and swivel, a solution that indicates someone in the house is capable of reading tiny print vertically while balancing on a chimney ledge.

"What's this book?" I ask, pointing at the red Russian volume. He smiles. Bening moves closer to him. Standing there, he tells me the story: "Eleanora Drapkina—I met her in Moscow. 'So you knew John Reed?' I asked. 'Knew him? I fucked him.' I said, 'Were you ever in a labor camp?' And she said, 'Oh, yes, sixteen years.' I said, 'My God, how do you feel about Stalin?' She said, 'Only hate.' I said, 'Really?' She said, 'Yes. But of course the revolution is in its early stages.' That was 1969." My mouth is hanging open; I'm dazzled by his brilliance, his easy recall of an encounter twenty-three years ago. Bening looks up and murmurs, "The places you've been, the people you've met." Exit Beatty.

Bening had a brief feminist moment when she took women's studies in college—she is of that generation—and came out "so mad with all my father's friends who flirted with me, and treated me like what I considered to be a sex object." She acted as her father's secretary twice in his "5 Great Rules of Selling" course, and was struck by "what an incredible performer he was. He loved the power of it, and he was good at it. They all revered him—he was the hero, the one who knew everything. My job was very silly, part of the quintessential Americanism of Dale Carnegie. The courses are for and about men; the secretary's just there to have a woman in the room. I was at that point when I was awkward enough not to be able to handle some silly man's flirtation."

Now she's reading Camille Paglia, and finds the concept of "humanist rather than feminist" to be attractive. "Nature comes first, and the natural inequality of the sexes is not qualitative but really there, and let's accept it. Virginia Woolf said it all in *A Room of One's Own*."

Sian Phillips, the great British actress, who was in *Valmont* with Bening and shared her apartment in Paris, recalls a jolly mess, "mountains of jewelry on the dining table, mountains of unopened mail in the armchair. She really should have a little rathole full of sweet papers somewhere," she says with great affection. Bening says she does have a room in the stark white house, and, no, it cannot be visited. "One needs it, figuratively and literally. And you need to be with someone who needs their privacy, too."

The great secrecy with which Bening and Beatty began their relationship has been documented in the press. Given that by getting together they were merely fulfilling the expectations of the press and the public, it is understandable that they would want to make the inevitable a private matter. "It didn't take a lot of thought about dissimulation; it's just absolute survival instinct. What you cherish you learn to keep to yourself."

Between them, she says, there was "an immediate kind of...recognition. It was unmistakable. I feel very very lucky, and very grateful about that. When something is clear, you don't have to...your heart tells you something and it's a joyful thing, a great great feeling. I can't trivialize it by trying to describe it. He means too much to me. *We* mean too much to me." The baby wakes up and begins to gurgle from the other sofa; Bening glides over, picks her up, and brings her back. "If you feel something strongly, that's the gift, to know your own heart. Sometimes in my life it has been difficult to know what I felt. I've been stupid and not known how I felt and not been in touch. That's the difficulty, getting away from How Should I Feel?, How I Want to Feel, How Others Would Like Me to Feel."

The baby's long fingers grab her cheek. "Warren has very fine hands too, great hands. One thing no one knows about him is how well he plays the piano. I bought him a book of lullabies so he can play them for her. It's the best kind of sharing you can do with your man. The experience is so joyful for the two of you, and so different. You're up in the middle of the night, and even if he's up—and Warren wakes up—he can't feed her. It's not the same.

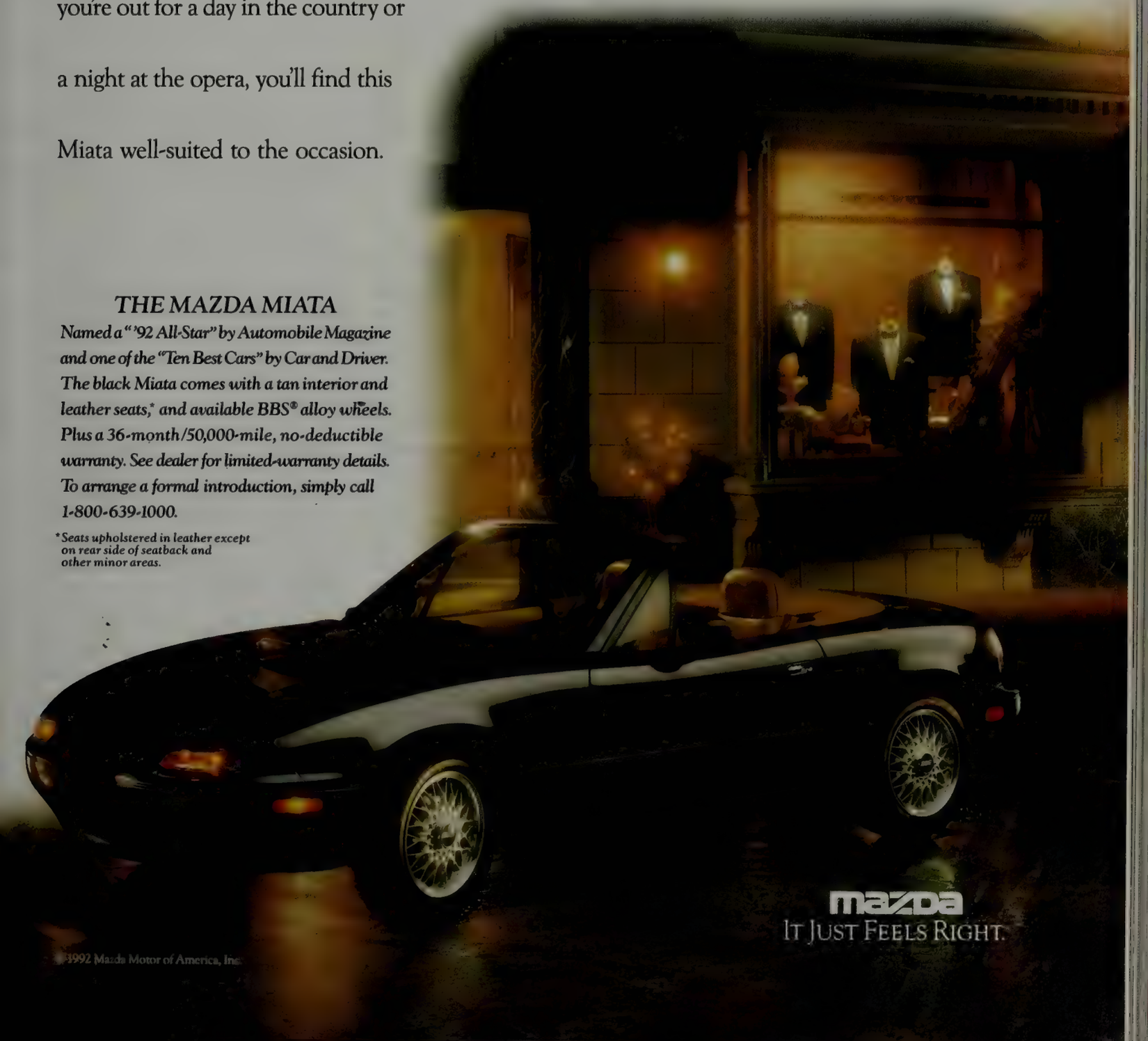
"Men make their sperm every day. Everything in life in terms of male-female relationships has to do with that. We are born with our eggs. Kathlyn has all of her eggs right now, she had them inside me." In Act One of *Coastal Disturbances*, one of the female characters asks, "You know what I keep thinking about?... How girl babies are born with all their eggs."

The pregnancy was her first. "I'd always wondered if I could have babies. I don't always see the relationship between what is fate and what is will, what you are intending in your life and what actually happens to you. It was something we both wanted, we both wanted to do, and we did it. I feel incredible gratitude. And I had a great pregnancy.

"I often imagine myself to be a very old lady, and think, What will matter? Very few things will matter. I don't want to live like 'Nothing matters, we're all going to die anyway,' and yet at the same time that's true. I remember reading in a biography of Sarah Bernhardt, right at the beginning of a chapter, summed up in one sentence, that she was fired from her theater and didn't work for two years. Two years! In your own life, the idea of going through that is terrible, but when it's written in a book it's just...so much stuff.

"When you're having an anxiety or a

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difficulty, one way of going on is to decide at one point that you want to be detached and at the same time you do give a damn about everything. Really caring, and really wanting life to be good, and really wanting to love well—if there's a way to make that happen, if we have any influence over that phenomenon. You have control only over yourself, and that's scary. It's a constant objective, a desire, something to strive for, and within that is the trick of knowing what's important and what's not, what matters and doesn't matter, in terms of being with somebody. What to sweat and what to let go.

"I'm not inclined toward analysis, at least at this point in my life, because some of those questions are best left unanswered. And in work, I don't want to ask some of the questions you must ask in therapy, because these are the things I'm working out when I'm acting. My work is my way of asking those questions. To be completely analyzed and balanced out means to be null and void.

"You learn how to stir up your inner chaos: to create a void in the character that must be filled. The process of drama is to learn how to create this need, and imagine its size. The more you can make it get you, the more you can be specific about what it is the character wants, the more you can build that inner need and make it specific to you. Crazy images in your mind can be useful. You can't describe them, but you know what ammunition they hold; they're like triggers. If you're doing it right, it becomes liberating." Ed Hastings, a director at the American Conservatory Theater, points out, "Annette has an uncommon ability to zero in on whatever it is that her character wants."

Her career was not built on a series of switchback neuroses and accidents. A year ago, she spoke to the students of Mesa College and characteristically barely talked about herself. According to Art Noll, this is what she told the students: "Make up your mind what it is you want, and make sure what you do advances what you want."

She would say it's all technique and hard work; indeed, her technique is astonishing. "She's so technically proficient," says Stephen Frears, "that John Cusack nearly had a heart attack."

At A.C.T., she learned voice production, and she demonstrates, with appropriate changes of voice, the effect of inflections, as taught by William Ball, particularly the "sustained inflection." She holds long spaces between the words, and as she does, your heart rate rises. "You learn how to create this empty space. But when you...create that...space...in... a room, you create a space...that needs to be...filled. You have control. Everyone sits on the edge of their seats, trying to fill it in, but you are the only one who can fill it. It's a dynamic; it's physical, not magic, but it appears to be magic. It's just a phenomenon."

After the first visit is over, Annette Bening shows me to the door—a tall, heavy door with a round silver handle, which she cannot open. She tugs and tugs. "It sticks," she says, laughing a little less with each tug. I am shown out a back door down a spiral staircase.

On the third visit to the Beatty house, a huge van from the Dy-Dee Nappy service dwarfs the cars parked in the driveway. Annette is a little dazed, up earlier than usual to begin the promotion tour to Europe.

"I'd always played leading parts in theater, and been given the opportunity to be the one that the story was about, the char-



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acter who goes through the most change. It's also great to then have the opportunity to be a supporting actor, and one of the dangers of becoming a celebrity is that if you want to take a supporting part it's considered odd. But it's good to not always have all the burden, to be the one who is backstage for a while, listening to the play.

"I used to see marriage as some kind of limitation," she says, "a concession. When I got married to Steve, I felt the opposite to be true. I felt very free. I experienced an elation, a freedom, a liberation. 'Now that's that, that's taken care of, now we can be free.'

"Now I'm trying to balance the personal instincts of being a woman, which have to do with having children, and supporting your partner and loving well, being there for them. Being flexible. But also keeping my experience, my own separateness alive. And I think as creative people Warren and I have a better chance of melding the two. All of what's happening in the personal sphere, in the sphere of people around me, are things you must have in order to have something to express. It means nothing to work if you have no personal life. If you have no personal life, you have no questions, no need to try to mine what's happening to you, to express it."

She remains good friends with her former husband, two years after their divorce was finalized. "One of the things I value about Steve so much is that he knows me in a way no one else does. He knows the amount of work that I do when I work, and he's the only one who does, because I don't ever talk about it or show it. He understood how I developed, because I was so young when I started with him; we have a shared evolution together. After a divorce where everything has been on the table, you don't feel like you have to withhold in order to preserve something. I look on my twenties as having been that growing time; ten years from now this will be my growing time. And I'll say to Warren, 'You were there for that, so you understand that.' It has to do with longevity, and that's the good point about having a solid long relationship; the fruits are being known, being understood from then till now. It's priceless. That's time."

Annette Bening Beatty has no superstitions, is not afraid of flying, does yoga as often as she can, and, as reported by Sian Phillips, goes running to ease tension and misery. She also, says Phillips, has a great sense of direction, and is a "fixer." Her favorite smell is jasmine, and her favorite food, dried apricots. Tina Howe says, "She's guarded as a person, but true and loyal and deep, and her emotional stability is carried over into acting." Frears is in fact still baffled by her: "She'd suddenly say things to make your mind race. The lives of Americans are fantastic, once you get away from Los Angeles and New York. Her experience is very original to somebody who comes from Europe." Bening's penchant for cautious paraphrase tends to dull a direct exchange; it is more fun ultimately to address her playfulness.

"What's your definition of heaven?" I ask her.

"I remember somebody asking Warren, 'What is your definition of success?' And he said, 'You don't know if you're working or playing.' Nirvana, or heaven, for me would be a place where there was work and play and you didn't know which one was which."

"Hell?"

"Alone and without pen or paper—that would be horrible," she says. (She keeps a diary.)

I suggest a game, invented by a friend

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named Tommy Cohen. You name your three favorite animals. You name the three qualities of each animal. Then you name your favorite drink and its three qualities.

Her first animal is the bird; it is "free to go, able to soar, above it all." Her second is the dolphin: "Playful, entertaining, and curious." For the third animal, she announces, "I don't have one. Um. The most fascinating—I wouldn't want to be one, is that O.K.?—is the hyena! They're horrible, vicious; the young eat each other. It's vicious, bloodthirsty, and nocturnal." The drink is champagne: "Makes you laugh, it only takes one glass, and you can get it anywhere."

"The key to the game," I explain, "is this: The first animal is how you want others to see you. Bird. The second animal is how you see yourself. Dolphin. The third animal is how you really are. Hyena."

"Great!" she shouts.

"And the drink is sex. 'Makes you laugh, it only takes one glass, and you can get it anywhere.' "

"That's wonderful!" she says. "Actually, I was trying to make up my mind between Diet Coke and coffee. But champagne is fine."

Two weeks later, in New York, Bening and Beatty, stunned with jet lag, receive me in their suite at the Carlyle. Room service brings up some pasta and salad for Bening; Beatty paces, trying to figure out why he's feeling so jangled. He finally isolates the cause as the many coffees he drank to keep going on the European tour. Neither of them can tally up how many interviews they gave. At Oxford, he was treated politely by the students at the Union, gently mocked in the press. In Paris, they ate dinner with friends at Jamin, and tête-à-tête at L'Ami Louis, where they ran into Miloš Forman. Beatty, exhibiting the fumbling but competent house-husband skills that we have seen in *Reds* and *Bugsy*, tells Bening about diapering Kathlyn that day. They cuddle on the couch in the underlit living room. In the last month, they have answered the questions of hundreds of journalists—about *Bugsy*, themselves, each other, the baby. There is really nothing left to say.

In the March 15 issue of the London *Sunday Times Magazine*, you could read in a large profile of Warren Beatty: "Her name was Eleanora Drapkina and she had been a beautiful fifteen-, sixteen-year-old girl. I said, 'So you were in love with John Reed?' And she said, 'In love? I f***ed him.' I thought, 'Hmm, this is getting interesting.' I said, 'Were you ever in a labour camp?' And she said, 'Oh yes, sixteen years.' I said, 'My God, how do you feel about Stalin?' She said, 'Only hate.' I said, 'Really?' She said, 'Yes. But of course the revolution is in its early stages.' " □

Richard Price

(Continued from page 147) profession that when he was accepted at Cornell he matriculated at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations rather than the liberal-arts college. "I thought it was like *public* relations—I'd be doing campaigns for clean ears. I thought it was my duty to get a job, not like go to school four years, then drive a cab so I could go to creative-writing classes."

Which was what he ended up doing anyway—at least until Saint Jude intervened.

His ambition was born on the bus up to Cornell, his freshman year, when he first read Lenny Bruce and, soon thereafter, Hubert Selby's *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. "That was the most important book of my young life," he says. "It was the first time I felt like my own experience was valid grounds for literature. I mean, my people are more conservative, less desperate, but I recognized Selby's people, I felt like I knew these people."

Price started taking writing courses at Cornell, which had produced such maverick talents as Richard Fariña and Thomas Pynchon. But what turned his impulse into a compulsion was the response he got to his first reading. "It was some sort of free-form poetry about growing up in the Bronx, but people really reacted to it. And I got this buzzing in my head like more, more, more. It was like sex."

So badly did he come to want it that when he couldn't afford the tuition at a graduate writing program "I actually wrote prayers to Saint Jude for intercession," he says.

"Saint Jude?"

"Yeah, what happened was I got into Wallace Stegner's graduate creative-writing program at Stanford, but I didn't have any money, and there was a waiting list of three people ahead of me for scholarships. I was living with my parents and ready to kill somebody when I saw this ad for Saint Jude, the patron saint of hopeless causes. I wrote a letter to the shrine, basically a solicitation for money. And this priest wrote me back and said he was going to the Vatican and he'd take my letter and remember me in his novenas. And I swear this is true—two days later I get a call from Stanford saying four of the people who got a scholarship had turned it down, and I got it. It had never happened before."

One is tempted to say that Saint Jude must have also had a hand in the success of Price's first novel. It came out in 1974, and it achieved for him in the seventies something akin to the instant success Jay McInerney and Bret Easton Ellis enjoyed in the eighties. He was a one-man Bronx-boy Brat Pack.

The book that became *The Wanderers* was a series of short, loosely linked, magic-realist accounts of Bronx street life told in the voices of gang members. Price had originally submitted it to Houghton Mifflin, the prestigious Boston publisher, as a book of short stories under the title *The Wanderers: Tales of Greaser Passion*. But a smart editor there had the smart idea to lose that subtitle, get Price to connect the stories in a year-in-the-life format, and publish the book as a novel.

It appeared to admiring reviews (one from Hubert Selby in the *Times Book Review*, who called it "a superbly written book...that forces us to feel closer to other human beings whether we...approve of them or not") at a time when a sixties-weary culture seemed ready for gritty and lurid fantasies of the greaser era. It soon became a cult favorite if not a best-seller; its appeal went beyond blue-collar readers to a generation of suburban baby-boomers encountering the disturbing complexity of adulthood and looking for a romantic Myth of Origins in the retrospective "He's a Rebel" sound track of their youth.

Price tells a funny story about being at a noisy party in the late seventies and being introduced by the great Dion to a musician whose name Price misheard in the din as "Maurice." "So this guy Maurice is telling me how much *The Wanderers* influenced his music and I'm going, 'Yeah, great, Maurice.' And then he told me his

name wasn't *Maurice*, it was *Bruce*—Bruce Springsteen."

Which is appropriate because *The Wanderers*—and *Bloodbrothers*, Price's second novel, also set in tough-guy Bronx-projects culture—has the same rough-edged romanticism, the same yearning side of the bad-boy-in-the-black-leather-jacket that Springsteen songs celebrate. *The Wanderers* became a terrific film of the same name directed by Philip Kaufman, and a favorite of street-guy movie types like Martin Scorsese and Don Simpson. The hyperkinetic producer once told me, "*The Wanderers* is, I swear to God, maybe next to *Moby Dick*, my favorite book of all time. When I finished *The Wanderers* I felt like part of my life was over. I mean, I was sad. I was like *depressed*. It pissed me off that he didn't write nine *Wanderers*."

Which was part of the problem for Price. He didn't want to repeat himself. Felt he'd already mined his boyhood in the Bronx projects to the point of creative exhaustion. "I didn't want to be the Dion of literature," he says, living off the golden oldies of his youth. By the early eighties his novels had earned him a lot of respect but not much money, and he was hearing the siren call of producers who were offering him hundreds of thousands of dollars a shot to write screenplays. "There's no sin in wanting to write screenplays," he says now. "The sin is being good at them."

His screenplay career at first seemed to defy the usual New York writer/Hollywood sellout/cynical disillusion/Fitzgerald crack-up cycle. He turned out scripts that were edgy and powerful (particularly in their first drafts). And contrary to the typical writer-gone-Hollywood story, he didn't pay the customary price in loss of respect, loss of literary credibility. In part because he stayed in New York (preferring marathon phone conversations with producers to flying to L.A.), in part because he kept all his New York friends entertained with wickedly funny accounts of Hollywood pitch meetings.

Still, if he didn't lose his downtown credibility, Price did begin to feel he'd lost his *way*. Part of it was the coke. After *Bloodbrothers* and *Ladies' Man* (which took him out of the Bronx and into the lonely heart of contemporary Manhattan), he got bogged down mining his Bronx past for a novel that would become *The Breaks*. And by that time coke was digging him deeper:

"After *Ladies' Man*, in 1978, I ran out of ideas. I was getting bored with my own autobiography and I had written two false novels that went nowhere and I didn't even send out. I was in a panic and I just started doing coke. And, uh, then the coke took over. There's nothing I could say that's not a cliché you haven't heard a million times before. First you're doing coke so you could write. Then you're writing so you have an excuse to do the coke. It was just a very bad two-to-three-year period in which I sort of banged out the rest of *The Breaks*."

The coke, he says, is what got him into doing screenplays, which turned out to be a much harder habit to quit. "I figured since I had a coke habit anyway I might as well get into screenwriting."

But as it turned out the coke crippled the screenwriting too. "Every day I'd write a great page, but it had nothing to do with the pages I wrote the day before, so I'd have a hundred great pages for a hundred different stories and I just couldn't get it together. It got to the point where I'd have to do a line to write a line, and it became a terrible strain on my health, my life—everything."

Now, he says, when he gives talks at junior high schools as part of a drug-awareness program, he talks about the way coke turned *him* into a clocker: "You know, the nightmare of coke is that you're always aware that at some point you're gonna run out. No matter how much you have. Therefore, the clock is your enemy. You sit at a dinner party and it's like 'How often can I go to the bathroom for a refill without people getting suspicious?' It's the tyranny of the clock—time is always running out on you.

"And at one of those schools the kids are like taking pity on me, they're saying, 'Well, why didn't you tell your girlfriend?' I said, 'Because then she would make me stop.' "

Finally, he says, he knew he had to stop. It was 1984, he was living with his soon-to-be wife, Judy Hudson, an attractive downtown artist. "We were planning a trip to Italy and I decided, That's it, I'm going to stop. I was terrified. Because it's always there and you always know how to get it. And what you're afraid of is yourself. You're afraid of your own weakness. But when I got back I found something miraculous happening: I started writing because I could concentrate."

Price disdains the self-congratulatory piety of post-rehab New Sobriety celebrities. "I mean, *People* magazine is filled with these like wildly successful assholes that used to have drug problems, and there they are on the beach at Santa Monica with their one-year-old, Ashley, and their other kid, Aaron, and it's like '*Well*, you wouldn't *believe* the way I *used* to be.' And meanwhile you know they're still a bunch of fucking assholes."

Still, it was his recovery process that gave him the impetus to do *Clockers*. "The thing about the drugs is it *did* play a big part in my wanting to write this book. I mean, I never did anything but sniffing. I didn't have like that eight-gram-a-day habit—just enough to ruin my life, become a major preoccupation, and affect every element of my life in a negative way." But about the time crack started coming in, Price was going to the Daytop Village rehab community. Not for his own habit, but as a kind of penance: he was teaching creative writing to some of the recovering teenagers there.

"Basically, you're talking about teenagers—nonwhite, broken homes, completely disenfranchised—and they're doing this drug that's ten times worse than regular, watered-down cocaine. And I'd say to them, 'Listen, I was like thirty-two, had published novels, had money, and *I* almost went completely down the toilet. Here you are, you're not out on your own yet, you're in a society dominated by white people, you got problems at home'—it just blew my fucking mind that these people were in such worse shape on paper than me and they were dealing with a drug so much more potent, thinking that it would help them *cope*. And it just...the thought of crack got under my skin and just like *seized* me...I felt like I had to run to it. I felt there's something about this crack thing...I'm from the Bronx and I was born in the hospital right behind Daytop Village and I had to run headlong into the bowels of this crack thing. I just wanted to reach out and like take the essence of what it was about. Plus, it was also going back to my roots as a writer. I started out with *The Wanderers*, writing about housing projects. I was writing about housing projects again."

Which is what brought him to Rodney, the rock-coke king of the Jersey City projects. And finally it was Rodney who brought Price—a man whose struggle to kick his habit had left him "afraid of his own weakness"—face-to-face with the snows of yesteryear for the first time since he'd quit.

It happened at Rodney's place, an apartment in the projects, one night after Price had earned Rodney's provisional trust out on the streets. This was the first time Rodney had shown him the product. It was, the way Price describes it, a chunk

the size of a small meteorite. "I'd stopped doing coke and I hadn't even *seen* it for years and years. He sets it down on this tacky table between us and he pulls out his big bowie knife and starts stabbing it, chopping it into golf-ball-size lumps. I'd never seen coke this color before. It was kind of light brown, it was so pure it wasn't even white—white means a lot of cutting agents. And I'm looking at it, but...It's like not my world. This is not *my* coke. This is not—you know, it's not like doing it at the *Odeon*, let me tell you."

Would he be tempted? Would he abandon his hard-won sobriety?

"I was leaning over the table watching him carve out rocks and I just felt like ...no desire whatsoever. Because the last thing I want to do is a *little* hit. I mean, the only thing worse than no coke," he says wryly, "is just one line. Fifteen minutes later and I'd be strung out of my mind in Rodney's world."

He survived that test, but suddenly another kind of threat manifested itself. Price's reverie on the rock of coke was interrupted by a noise at the front door, and a panicky Rodney began acting as if a SWAT team was about to blast its way in.

Price recalls how Rodney's demeanor changed. "'Here's the big bad coke-dealing motherfucker and he's telling me as he stabs the block of coke how he deals with guys who cross him. 'First time, you fuck them up; second time, you kill them, man...' But as soon as he hears the sound at the door he's taking the dope and hiding it and going, 'Oh shit.' "

Price too was running scared, at least in his head. "I had this image of a police raid with a camera crew from *Cops* coming through the door and I'm caught in a freeze-frame on national TV trying to explain that 'no, see, I'm really here as a *writer*.' And the next thing you know I'm giving interviews to the Bergen *Record* from jail."

In fact, as it turned out, Rodney knew it wasn't *Cops* coming through the door, knew from the sound of the key in the lock it was someone he feared far more: his wife. You see, says Price, "Rodney's been married twenty years to a deeply religious church-lady type." And Rodney *swears* she doesn't know what business he's in. "So it's like he gets the dope hidden away and she comes in and it's 'How you doing?' and I'm saying, 'How are you, ma'am?' And she says, 'With the Lord.' *With the Lord!* They're married twenty years and she doesn't know? She's *gotta* know. Or maybe..."

Price goes into an extended riff on the perverse strength of this marriage, the unspoken understanding, the underpinnings of evasions and elisions, the enormous *delicacy* of the arrangement: she pretends not to know, and he pretends not to know she knows, and they *both* pretend not to know they're both pretending.

It is this novelist's eye for the plangent complexity and unpredictability of human relationships that distinguishes Price's fiction. I was concerned when I first approached the huge manuscript of *Clockers* that, with its sensational subject matter—murder, coke, crime, cops—and with his years of writing page-a-minute dialogue for screenplays, what would be lost would be the kind of constantly surprising intimate observation of behavior that made his previous novels so illuminating. But, in fact, what makes *Clockers* so impressive is that on nearly every page there's a moment of acute perception of the kind that distinguishes novelistic realism of a high order from the clichéd realism of "reality" shows like *Cops* or the neo-Superfly clichés of *New Jack City*—moments that are object lessons in the difference between the emblematic and the generic in fiction.

One moment I'm particularly fond of takes place in a bar; two key characters, Strike and his older brother, Victor, are having drinks together. Strike is Rodney's upwardly mobile protégé, the one who's so conflicted about his rise in the corporate hierarchy of coke dealing that he's given himself an ulcer. Unlike Strike, Victor has been trying to bootstrap his way out of the projects playing by the rules, supporting a wife and family with an exhausting schedule that has him working as a security guard in a Columbus Avenue boutique by day, then hustling back to New Jersey to serve as the manager of a fast-food franchise by night.

Victor's bitter because he's working himself to death and it still isn't enough to keep his weary head above water, while his younger brother, who's willing to break the rules, is raking in thousands of dollars a week and supervises his own crew of "clockers"—he's an *executive*.

That night at the bar, something's brewing inside Victor, something bitter and inconsolable, but Strike doesn't see it, just feels pity for what a sucker his working-stiff brother is. Pity that turns to contempt when he sees his brother doing this peculiar thing he does, writing the names of imaginary teams on his cocktail napkin, teams with names like "Washington Warriors" and "Dallas Devastators":

> Strike shook his head. Goddam he's still fucking around with that dumb-ass "aroundball." Two years earlier, when they'd shared a bedroom, Victor jumped out of bed one night and started to write down the rules of a game he'd just dreamed about. He called it aroundball, but Strike never understood how it was played—it seemed to him like a cross between dodgeball and soccer. The game had become an obsession of Victor's; for months he was writing up new by-laws, or trying out new names for the franchises.

What's really going on here, what Victor's *really* dreaming about, is not a new sport but a new world played by his rules, a dreamworld that rewards him for his hard work rather than breaking his heart and bestowing its favors on those like his brother who make their own rules. It's a beautiful way of expressing what's going on inside an honest man trapped in a dishonest world.

And a bit later on there's another telling moment when Victor, in an internal monologue, is cursing himself for something he said earlier that day at the boutique where he works. It seems an attractive, well-heeled woman, trying on a kimono, asked him how it looked on her. And Victor, trying awkwardly to make an impression, told her, "You look *davishing*," knowing almost instantly he'd gotten the word—and maybe the world—he aspired to mortifyingly wrong.

It's moments like these that make *Clockers* transcend its sensational cops-and-coke-dealers setting. Price, who's reluctant to be caught out describing, much less praising, his own fiction, does concede he has "an eye for the poetry of misnomers, the poetry of non sequiturs. I mean, compared to Robert Stone talking about God and man, I feel like a dung beetle: I'm just trying to get the convolutions of the hair and the shit right. But I *can* nail the way people really talk, I can nail a gesture dead on. I've got like X-ray eyes for the little gestures that go right by everybody. I don't go for the big picture so much as a lot of *little* big pictures."

Jersey City. "The Iron Triangle of Hell." That's what Price calls this zone of devastation, this wasteland within a wasteland we're driving through

now. It's a vast field of scrap and garbage and what looks like rusting toxic-waste canisters in the ravaged heart of this crumbling urban center. Jersey City has all of the plagues and ugliness but none of the glamour or attention of big cities like New York and L.A. No mythic Crips-and-Bloods gang-war grandeur; no Renaissance past like Harlem's; no visibility in the media. Just a cruel, vicious, remorseless process of degradation.

Price is describing the intricate ecology of the Iron Triangle of Hell, the way junkies with shopping carts scrounge through the garbage for iron and other scrap metal to sell for pennies a pound to buy drugs from the dealers at one vertex of the triangle, then head for the methadone clinic across the way, where they get paid to take an AIDS test (and never ask for the results). And then there's the final vertex, "this Gothic ziggurat," Price calls it, a vast, soot-blackened, pre-war hospital complex. "That's where they all go to—to die."

The emblematic moment of his long journey through this Hell, Price says, was "when I walked into this shooting gallery and it was like knee-high in hypodermics and everything. And in the middle there was a headless dove."

"A headless dove?"

"I mean, who was so unsubtle as to rip the head off a dove?"

Still, the question will be raised: Despite the three years he spent haunting the Iron Triangle of Hell, can a well-off white writer ever be more than a tourist?

"He'll probably catch some shit about it," Pete Dexter says. "You know, how does a middle-class white guy pretend to know what it's like." Dexter thinks Price's success in getting "inside that kid"—Strike, his upwardly mobile clocker—refutes the objection: "It's really bullshit because, when you come down to it, what emotion is in this kid's head that I don't know anything about?"

Nonetheless, one night at Price's loft I was witness to Price's "catching some shit" on this issue from a visitor: "Don't you think there's something patronizing about you coming from New York and sort of studying the natives and then—"

"I'm *not* studying the natives," Price interrupted heatedly. "There's nothing patronizing. I mean, I'm not a painter, but I have a perfect right to do a painter in 'Life Lessons' [the Scorsese-directed segment of *New York Stories*, starring Nick Nolte as a troubled artist]. I'm not saying what I did is the truth, but it's *honest*—this is what I saw, what I know. I mean, I felt *inspired* by what I saw, I felt like writing like I never felt like writing before. And, you know, Jersey City is right across the river and people just don't *know* what it's like to live there, what it's like to be a kid in the Curries Woods project. Because the people that live there and know about it don't become writers. I mean, let some guy from Martin Luther King Drive in Jersey City write the story. I'm not in competition with anybody. But I'm gonna get in there. I'm gonna get the news. I'm gonna bring it back and I'm gonna convert it into art.

"What I had to learn about this book is—I started thinking about Strike and this kid Tyrone, this eleven-year-old who idolizes Strike and who is on the verge of giving his life over to the dealing hierarchy, and I kept thinking, What would a black kid do here, what would a black kid do there? Is this cultural imperialism? And then, after actually hanging out with these kids, I realized, Why am I saying 'black' all the time? What would an eleven-year-old *kid* do? That's the baseline. It's not like the difference between black and white behavior is so exotically different that your own experience is null and void simply because you're not black. I mean, you know, the human heart's the human heart. I mean, people *yearn*. They yearn for the same things, maybe with a different brand name, but it's the same yearning."

As for another potential source of controversy about *Clockers*—the casual racism of the cops—Price says, "Cops are empiricists: because of their job they see people at their worst" and make the worst extrapolations about them as a group. The way Price describes it, what comes across as casual racism derives from a deeper, even darker source—a kind of universal bottomless cop cynicism about *all* human behavior which often expresses itself in a perversely upbeat gallows humor.

He cites a horrifying example: a phrase the cops he ran with used—an appallingly cruel, hideously cynical cop worldview compressed into a single three-word phrase. Price was telling me about the cop notion that there's a peculiar self-limiting factor built into the dynamics of America's Iron Triangles of Hell. That crack, needle drugs, AIDS, and crime are killing off so many victims in the ghettos, both predators and prey, that the multiple plagues are beginning to burn themselves out, for lack of new souls and bodies to consume.

"You know what the cops call that?" Price asks. "The self-cleaning oven."

The impetus for *Clockers*, however, the mainspring of its plot, is the determination of one white homicide cop to overcome his cynicism and racism and find a reason to care about the fate of one young black murder suspect no one else wanted to think twice about. The plot device grew out of a memorable moment in the course of a real murder investigation Price was tracking with a homicide detective.

"He'd got a confession from a kid, but even though he had the lockup, in the back of his head it's like 'What if the kid didn't do it? Maybe he's taking the pressure off somebody else, withholding the real reason. If the true circumstances come out in court, I'm gonna look like a horse's ass. I got to know *why* this kid really did it.'

"So we go to the parents' house, they're watching *Dynasty*. They can barely turn away from Krystle and Blake, you know, they're not helping him. And the detective finally figures, 'Ah, to hell with it'—you know, 'The kid's locked up; it's not my problem.' And as he's walking out of the house there's this shelf of tchotchkes, and he says, 'Uh, can I borrow this picture?'—he wants to use it to question the kid's friends. And the parents say, 'What do you want *that* picture for? That ain't him.' And he says, 'No? Gee, it looks just like him.' 'Yes,' they say, 'that's his twin brother.' "

Suddenly, a whole new dimension to the case opened up: was one twin sacrificing himself for the other? "You know," Price says, "God's a second-rate novelist."

The decision of the cop in the novel to care more than the job calls for is a stirring moment: it represents one of the few times when a human impulse transcends what Price refers to as "the algebra of need" (a William Burroughs phrase) and "the arithmetic of mortality" (Price's term) that otherwise rule human interaction so rigidly in the projects.

Algebra? Arithmetic? It was Robert De Niro, as far as I know, who first used the word "scientist" in connection with Price. I'd put in a call to see if the taciturn actor would have anything to say about the unusual fact that he was playing two Richard Price characters in a row. And to see what he'd have to say about Price himself, as a kind of semi-

Richard Price

legendary New York character. About the latter, De Niro was not very forthcoming. "Richard," he said, laughing. "He's a *very* sick man."

But he had a lot to say in praise of Price's ear, his dialogue, the way it often sounds "crazy, off-the-wall, or preposterous, yet when you meet the actual people he wrote about, it's very true."

I asked him about the two Price characters he's just played—Wayne, the painstaking crime-scene cop in *Mad Dog*, and Harry, the fast-talking hustler lawyer in *Night and the City*. Did they have anything in common? "I mean," I said, "they're both desperate dreamers—"

"No, I don't buy that," De Niro interrupted. "I don't think they have much in common. Harry's very flashy, he's from the hip, and Wayne's very methodical, he's like a *scientist*."

De Niro is talking about two different Price characters, but he could have been talking about two sides of Price himself. Because while he's a fast-talking, droll, and sardonic hipster type in person, in his prose he can be a methodical precisionist, a craftsman, a scientific observer of human behavior. The kind of scientist who looks for continuities rather than discontinuities, continuity between black and white behavior, continuity between the projects of his youth and the projects reigned over by Rodney and Champ.

The challenge in writing *Clockers*, he says, was to repress the hipster in favor of the detachment of his scientist side—to submerge the pyrotechnic narrative voice that had been his stylistic signature in his previous novels. "My editor [at Houghton Mifflin], John Sterling, said, 'This is a big book and it's about some serious subjects. First thing we gotta do is get rid of all that pyrotechnic shit because otherwise your narrator is gonna be in competition with the characters and it's just gonna be one voice too many and the whole place is gonna explode. What I want you to do is—the best thing that you do, your ace in the hole, your voice—I want you to obliterate it. I want you to write as neutral as you can. Let your characters run the show.' "

Excising the subjective point of view is a difficult task for any novelist, but Price had displayed an impressive talent for this sort of detached objectivity in the investigation into gay orgy clubs that inspired him to write *Ladies' Man*.

The origin of the novel, he says, was a deal he made with *Penthouse* magazine to investigate sex bars in New York. "I started out with straight singles bars. And then the next night I went with an old friend of mine from college who's gay. And he took me to these places like the Stud, the Anvil, the Speculum—you know, sort of dress-up-and-get-banged-in-the-ass gay bars. And I'd never been around anything like that. And first, you know, I'm scared. My heart is going *whomp-whomp*. People are getting blown, fucked, and sucked all around me. And I never saw that. I never saw another man's hard-on in my whole life. And my friend disappeared and I'm all alone with my fucking notebook.

"And all of a sudden, after about fifteen minutes, I start realizing that I'm a little *miffed* since nobody's making a pass at me. It's not that I like wanted a boyfriend, but it's the same dynamic as the straight singles bar. You know, that algebra of need. And I'd been thinking about what to write after *Bloodbrothers*. And I just said, Man, seven days in the life of a guy whose mooring gets snapped. His girlfriend dumps him, he cuts loose, feels complete anarchy, and an old college friend who's gay takes him into that world.

"For all this rampant acting out—I mean, I went to places that I saw people handcuffed in bathtubs with funnels in their mouths—I have a feeling that this pre-AIDS gay life was a realization of some kind of *male* sexuality, not just gay. That straight men wanted to act out but were never able to do. It has nothing to do with homosexuality or heterosexuality; it's just men have this sexual aggressiveness. And when you've got a whole sexual arena that's men *and* men—you know: stand back. I mean, I never heard of any *lesbian* places like the Anvil."

"This is my little kingdom tonight," Price is saying. "These four square blocks."

He's standing on the sidewalk in front of his building, on the hectic stretch of lower Broadway between Tower Records and Shakespeare & Company, and there's some truth to his tongue-in-cheek "kingdom" claim. Just around the corner in an alley off Bond Street the crew for *Night and the City* is filming De Niro's final scene. Price stops in one trailer to schmooze with director Irwin Winkler (*Guilty by Suspicion*). Then a few steps down he ducks into De Niro's trailer to say hello to the star, who's looking dapper in a slightly garish way in an electric-blue sport shirt. ("His whole wardrobe's from Moe Ginsburg," Price says, referring to the splashy lower-Manhattan discount clothing store. "I specified it in the script.")

Then it's two blocks north and one block west to Mercer Street, site of the Bottom Line, where he's doing a reading from *Clockers* on a double bill with Jim Carroll, the legendary ex-junkie neo-Beat poet. When Price arrives, there's a full house of very downtown types, including a remarkable number of gorgeous Pre-Raphaelite, neo-Beat-type babes in black.

I have a sense that, although he'd never let on, this occasion is particularly satisfying for Price—not because of the women, but because it confirms that he hasn't lost his longtime status as hip downtown writer-icon, despite having gone Hollywood in a financially humongous way. He's here to read from a book which hasn't been published yet but which has already netted him $2 million from Hollywood. But he's still paired with Jim Carroll, who reads poems about watching Allen Ginsberg jerk off—*very* hardcore, no-compromise stuff—on a downtown bill. What more could any New York writer want?

That night, however, there was a momentary echo of the time when Price thought he'd lost it—his soul, his credibility—in those hours of script discussions with the Hollywood types who loved him too much. You could hear it in his description of what he was *really* aiming for when he wrote *The Color of Money* for Scorsese and Paul Newman. Earlier in the evening I'd asked him what that convoluted tale of macho consciousness was really *about*.

"It was really about me making four hundred grand," he said, laughing. Then went on more seriously: "It's about a guy [Newman as Fast Eddie Felson, retired pool hustler *extraordinaire*] who creates a Frankenstein monster. He takes a kid who's pure [Tom Cruise], and he, you know, he dips him in the acid of his own experience. But in the process of creating a Frankenstein monster [turning Cruise into a hustler like himself], he discovers the purity of himself *before* he became this thing, and now *he* wants to be a pure player, but he's unleashed this monster and it's roaming the country.

"And it's about getting hold of this kid and making *amends*. He's destroyed this kid, he's created this monster of cynicism—and it's about paying the *price*. You know, paying the price to

Richard Price

achieve a state of peace and a state of grace."

It occurred to me as Price was going through this impassioned and painstaking explication of the film—or at least of the first draft, before he had to make it "less dark" for Newman ("Paul likes to play rogues, but he won't play villains")—that what he was really describing was the price *he* paid, the struggle that had been going on within himself. Between the "pure player"—the novelist—and the "Frankenstein," the "monster of cynicism" he became when he turned into a monstrously successful Hollywood screenwriter. And how in doing *Clockers,* in returning to novels, "he discovers the purity of himself *before* he became this thing."

I asked him if there was any truth to this parallel.

"Well, I told you, I don't like to think in meta-terms," he said irritably. Then he grudgingly conceded: "Well, I didn't think so when I was writing the fucking thing, but you know, in retrospect I could say, yeah, maybe."

A more forthcoming and definitive answer comes later that night when he takes the stage at the Bottom Line and begins to introduce the section from *Clockers* he's going to read.

"Um, the last time I was here, I was reading from screenplays," he tells the audience. "And this time I actually have a book. I used to be a novelist, before I was a screenwriter. Now I'm a novelist again. You know, with a big *N*." □

Wenner's Streak

(Continued from page 129) rock star energized by his audience, he also transmits it back. "One of the things about Jann," says his former employee Timothy White, now the editor in chief of *Billboard* magazine, "is that he needs to see his effect on other people all the time."

Certainly, few executives of any stripe go about it so transparently. While he sits at his desk plowing through minor chores, he casually shoves various documents my way: fan letters, pictures of him on the Malcolm Forbes yacht or posing with his Harley-Davidsons, and, best of all, the day's phone-call list—a nuclear stockpile of people like Tom Cruise, Don Henley, Robbie Robertson, and Wenner's new trophy (and motorcycle buddy), Jason Priestley, the twenty-three-year-old star of TV's *Beverly Hills, 90210.* For someone obsessed with appearances—especially his own—he seems stunningly unaware of how he comes across.

"They're just jealous," he says of his critics. And many of them are. After all, Wenner isn't a Forbes or a Newhouse or a Hearst—he merely lives like one. His close friends are rock stars (Mick Jagger, Yoko Ono, Billy Joel and Christie Brinkley, Mick and Ann Jones, John Mellencamp, Jackson Browne), entertainment moguls (Lorne Michaels, Ahmet Ertegün, Richard Snyder, David Geffen, Barry Diller, Don Simpson, Bob Pittman), fashion designers (Calvin Klein, Diane Von Furstenburg), movie stars (Cruise, Richard Gere, Kathleen Turner, and, until a recent falling-out over the Wenners' disaffection with his wife, Michael Douglas), and Kennedys.

And then there are all those toys. Besides the airplane, Wenner owns five motorcycles, two Amagansett dream houses (nearly next door to each other), and a five-story Manhattan town house (formerly owned by Perry Ellis) that he bought in 1987 for $4.2 million. He takes as many as five or six ski vacations a year, has summers off to be with his family, and indulges in cross-country motorcycle jaunts with his pals—jaunts for which he hires special mechanics and photographers, and brings along vans full of alternate bikes. His "media empire" may be small, but he and his wife, Jane, own the whole kit and caboodle, 100 percent. Which means that they are each worth, as Jane has been heard to boast, "half of $250 million."

But wealth alone will never satisfy Wenner. "Jann's a born wannabe," says one former employee. When he made the deal to buy *US* from Steve Ross, the chairman of Warner Communications, "there was no reason for Ross to even be there—*US* was nothing to him, and he has a publishing division that could have handled it. But Jann insisted that he would only sign the papers with Steve Ross, and he wanted a photographer hired to take a handshake picture. I don't think Steve knew who the hell Jann was. Ross's office is like a huge penthouse, with incredible antiques and gorgeous furniture. You know how in *Kramer vs. Kramer* there's this scene where Dustin Hoffman brings his kid to his office, and the kid runs through the office and he goes, WOW! That was Jann in Steve Ross's office. And, of course, he wanted the photo of him shaking hands with Ross to be published in *The New York Times.*"

Wenner's strange artlessness has even stranger origins—his childhood reads almost like a case history. Born in New York but raised just north of San Francisco, Jan Simon Wenner (he changed it to Jann in prep school) was the scion of a well-to-do but decidedly eccentric family. His father built a small fortune in the baby-formula business, and his mother was something of an artiste—a novelist, a businesswoman, a dyed-in-the-wool bohemian. Jann grew up smart and comfortable but terribly neglected. When he was twelve, he was sent to boarding school south of Los Angeles—five hundred miles from home. Shortly thereafter, his parents divorced, and then engaged in a custody battle of the most damaging kind. As Jann would later tell his friends, neither wanted their son.

"This guy should be an emotional cripple," says Timothy White, "and he's not. He's really not. I mean, he gets up and makes his life work. That may be the greatest of his accomplishments—keeping his life running. And not letting that awful thing undo him."

Wenner has often baffled his friends and associates, acting by turns sentimental and icy, ridiculously generous and ridiculously vindictive. His employees recount how he paid their hospital bills, lavished gifts on them; MTV's Kurt Loder even credits Wenner with saving him from the clutches of the I.R.S. Yet Wenner is also renowned for throwing tantrums and pulling rank; his discourtesy can shock even his closest friends. "When I was there, he just treated people like they were beneath him," says one former editor, "by picking on them and abusing them. He was bad to secretaries. He was bad to waiters. He was bad to hotel people. He was bad to anybody who was in that sort of service thing. Like they weren't even people. And then he would fall all over anybody who was celebrated." That sort of behavior might seem like simple boorishness in someone less ebullient, affectionate, and charming; in Wenner's case, it bespeaks an insensitivity that can at times seem pathological.

But there's another way of looking at it.

Wenner's Streak

As one *Rolling Stone* editor puts it, "He can be a very good guy and he can be an asshole. But what makes Jann different is that these are the good and bad actions of a child, not an adult. He is very, very childlike. He can be cold and calculating the way a spoiled child is if he's not getting his way, or he can be Please Love Me—'Here, you take my candy.' It's all about Me, all about My Needs."

"Jann reminds me of a kind of living blowtorch," says his skiing buddy the movie producer Don Simpson. "He can be warm and glowing and as personable as anybody I've ever met. But then he can focus that blowtorch and cut right through to the heart. He's as tough a gunfighter as ever lived."

He had to be, just to survive his own indulgences. The seventies and eighties were crazy years for a lot of people, but none more than Jann Wenner. "I used to come in to the office at noon," Wenner admits, "sometimes one—that was my schedule. You don't get as much done that way. But, you know, in those days I was a drug addict." And how did that affect the magazines? "Oh, we would have been a lot farther along," he says. "I could have grown the magazines much more by now without the drugs. You know, you go to bed late, come in late, and so much of the day is all that"—he makes a yak-yak-yak motion with his hand—"instead of really working. But it was a lot of fun."

For some, perhaps. Wenner's fun has become the stuff of journalistic legend. There was the time, for instance, when he was interviewing a well-known writer in his office and suddenly pardoned himself, turned his head, and threw up in the wastebasket. There was the time when, after a night of heavy cocaine snorting, he arrived preposterously late for a fancy luncheon with Jacqueline Onassis, sat down looking red-eyed and bedraggled, and abruptly sneezed a gout of blood onto the tablecloth; he was later heard in his office bragging about the incident on the phone.

And for every story like these, there are a dozen smaller accounts—of grotesquely drunken speeches made at august gatherings, of hilariously naïve political pronouncements delivered to party bigwigs, of amphetamines being prescribed by the editor himself to dilatory writers, of *Rolling Stone* employees offering to share cocaine with their boss, only to watch their stash disappear up his nose. Wenner seemed eager to devour the world, to suck in anything and everything that might fill the void his parents' abandonment had so obviously created. His enemies accused him of being interested only in money, but that was plainly a canard. What Wenner really wanted was love—and, like some latter-day Citizen Kane (a character he didn't mind being compared to), he turned mean if he didn't get it. When Paul McCartney refused to invite him to a party, Wenner inserted an insulting line in a McCartney cover story. When publisher Joe Armstrong, who had left the magazine in disgust just before it moved to New York in 1977, dropped by to take a look at the New York offices, Wenner told friends that he had come begging for money. When editor Marianne Partridge resigned to become the editor in chief of *The Village Voice,* Wenner happened upon her new boss, Clay Felker, in a restaurant and took the opportunity to whisper in his ear. According to Robert Draper's superb book, *Rolling Stone Magazine,* he then returned to his table and informed his companion, "I told him some things about Marianne. He'll never trust her now!"

But the darkest stories—the ones that still obsess former *Rolling Stone* writers and editors—are the ones about the way Wenner would turn on his own people, would rage at them and pick at their wounds and fill them with terror. "Jann used to say at editorial meetings, 'You know, I love to be mean, I love to be mean,' " Timothy White recalls. "And it was true. And you would think, God, who would put that kind of energy into cleaning my clock?" During the crazy years, *Rolling Stone* could sometimes feel like a classic alcoholic family, secretive and frightened and ingrown, a family in which the kids woke up every morning wondering what sort of mood Dad would be in today.

It was a family for Wenner too—but of quite a different sort.

In 1968, he had married his dream girl, a dark, exotically beautiful art student named Jane Schindelheim; her father was a dentist, and her family had helped raise the $7,500 that launched *Rolling Stone.* But Jann and Jane did not exactly constitute the apple-pie-and-white-picket-fence household Wenner craved. While Jann worked day and night, Jane battled a host of neurotic ailments, including anorexia, agoraphobia, and a fear of earthquakes so powerful that Wenner credits it with motivating the magazine's move to New York.

Wenner had never had a real family, and he didn't have one now. And so, in his search, he turned to the magazine that had become an extension of his own arrested ego.

In those days, *Rolling Stone* was virtually a boys' club, a club to which fledgling male scribblers flocked in order to become Writers. Often they succeeded. "It was a real historic period in American journalism," says Sarah Lazin, a literary agent who used to be the magazine's chief of research. "The writers were just these guys, twenty-four- and twenty-six-year-olds who were doing amazing pieces, amazing work. Jann gave them space, encouragement; he created an atmosphere so that they flourished. Then he would have these ego fights with people, and sometimes good people would leave, so he would encourage new people. It was like being in this hip club. We felt we were the best magazine in the world."

Eventually, the feeling faded. Rock 'n' roll surrendered to disco, the sixties generation shriveled to the Me Generation, *People* magazine, for better or for worse, spawned a new era in journalism, and *Rolling Stone* moved from groovy, laid-back San Francisco to the fast lanes of New York. Even the drugs changed—cocaine, with its hard charge, replaced friendlier highs like marijuana and LSD. "That's when Jann wanted to change the magazine," says Lazin. "He wanted the pieces to be shorter. And everybody was bemoaning it, but in retrospect it wasn't happening just at *Rolling Stone;* it was the end of an era in all of journalism."

New York in the late seventies was about social life, about ambition, about leaving the nest. The boys at *Rolling Stone* left en masse. For the first time, women came to power. Harriet Fier, who had begun as a switchboard operator, was now managing editor, and other talented women, like Lazin and Partridge and Christine Doudna, began to dominate the magazine. Wenner's search for a family was following an ancient pattern—the boys' club was giving way to the company of women.

It didn't last. Shuddering from the expense of moving to New York and from its now tenuous hold on the market it had once dominated, *Rolling Stone* began a financial downturn. So did Wenner. Every new venture he undertook, from the revival of *Look* magazine to a Paramount movie deal, withered before his eyes. Even *US,* which he acquired a piece of in 1985 and then bought outright in 1989, has yet to turn a profit. (Wenner admits, "I don't pay as much attention to *US* as to the other stuff, but I read it before I read *Rolling*

Stone." The only circumstance under which he would ever sell it, he says, is "if I sold the whole thing, the whole company—which I don't contemplate doing.")

Then several things happened all at once. "Jann just started getting richer in about 1983 or '84," recalls Kent Brownridge, the company's general manager. "And by 1986, '87, I mean, he was *really* rich. The company's earnings just skyrocketed." Indeed. In 1982, the magazine was making roughly $500,000 a year. By 1992, it was making $22 million.

There were three reasons for *Rolling Stone*'s astonishing surge, and not the least of them was the simple decision to stop publishing it on newsprint and start publishing it on slick paper. Which worked beyond Wenner's wildest dreams. "A lot of the advertisers that we wanted and didn't have," says Brownridge, "were selling vanity products. If you look at a personal-grooming ad, there's always some very good-looking person with the ends of his hair sparkling and shining, and you can't see those hair ends on newsprint. So we just switched, and that brought in an amazing amount of advertising spending."

The second change was the arrival of MTV—which Wenner at first poohpoohed as a fly-by-night operation that would never catch on (its co-founder, Bob Pittman, is now one of his motorcycle buddies). MTV made rock stars spiff up their looks, made them recognizable enough to endorse products, made them, suddenly, desirable. "When the image changed, just in that subtle way," says Brownridge, "marketers were falling all over each other to get in on it."

Finally, *Rolling Stone*'s own image needed cleaning up, and for that purpose a small Minneapolis advertising firm named Fallon McElligot Rice was hired. The campaign it hatched quickly became infamous.

"Perception," read the copy on one page, and you saw a roach clip. "Reality," read the copy on the next page, and you saw a money clip. Underneath, the *Rolling Stone* logo. If your Perception of the magazine evoked a hippie, the Reality was a preppy. Perception was a blank page. Reality was a bar of soap. Most egregious of all, in the eyes of *Rolling Stone*'s reeling employees, was the so-called political ad. Perception: George McGovern. Reality: Ronald Reagan.

The Perception/Reality campaign seemed to dash forever the dreams of those who still believed *Rolling Stone* represented some imperishable, inviolable ethos. But it worked like gangbusters. As the money poured in, Wenner spent less time at the office making it and more time around town spending it. He had looked to *Rolling Stone* to reconstruct the family that had spurned him; now he began to build a family of his own.

In 1985, after years of trying to have their own child, Jann and Jane Wenner adopted a son, Alexander. Less than two years later, Jane gave birth to another boy, Theo, and then, in 1990, to a son named Gus. Meanwhile, Jann underwent a reconciliation with his father (he now denies that they had ever had a falling-out, though his friends testify to the contrary) and then nursed him through a long and painful struggle with cancer, to which he succumbed in 1989. "That makes you think," Jann says. "You think, Better shape up."

No one who knows him doubts how much his sons have changed him. "They calm me down, make me want to stay around longer. And then you do what you have to do to be with them, which means take those things out of your act that stop you from being with them. I spend a lot of time with the kids, probably more than the average working dad. I'm totally nuts about them."

Wenner has reached a turning point. Now his family can be his family. And *Rolling Stone*, at long last, can be just a business.

For the Wenners, the days of wild carousing aren't entirely past, but they're not part of Jann's official functioning anymore. Jane has left the worst of the psychic bends behind, and she and Jann have become leaders of their Hamptons-based social circuit. Though friends claim that Jane has grown rather grand lately, that she complains a bit too loudly about the servants (the Wenners have at least eight), they're still impressed by her generosity and wit, and by her ultra-hip habit of showing up at practically any engagement in blue jeans and a striped French sailor shirt, her hair done take-it-or-leave-it style. Her taste in furnishings and decorations is, in the words of her neighbor Lee Radziwill, "very refined, eclectic, and pared-down," from the Agra carpets and Russian icons in her Manhattan house to the light slipcovered furniture and sisal rugs that dominate the older of their two Amagansett houses—the one now being rented by socialites William Rayner and Katharine Johnson. The new Amagansett house is huge and much starker, with Russian and Indian furniture, and décor by the septuagenarian designer Ward Bennett, who was the house's original architect in 1968; he adapted it in 1990 for the Wenners, with an emphasis on sweeping views of ocean and dunes. Here, as in New York City, the Wenners throw dinner parties of from four to forty people, and despite the plethora of butlers and maids, their guests describe the atmosphere as "cozy."

"They're very gracious as host and hostess," says their friend Nona Summers, "except you have to make Jann get the good wine out—he always gives me plonk. But you never feel uncomfortable there. Jann can be snippy, but then I just change rooms. And there are plenty of rooms to change to."

Jann, meanwhile, has joined the charity circuit—at least those charities whose other board members are pals of his. His favorite, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, has been stubbornly fund-raising for seven years in order to erect a wildly lavish $65 million I. M. Pei building in the bustling heart of...did you say Cleveland? "By sheer will Jann has held this thing together," says his fellow board member Seymour Stein, the head of Sire Records. "Look, if it wasn't for Jann Wenner, Cleveland would be history today."

And if it weren't for Jann Wenner, what would happen to *Rolling Stone*? The magazine looks better than it has in years. Under Bob Wallace's reign, it has once again made rock 'n' roll the springboard for its forays into the wider culture; its writing has grown in trenchancy and style, and its design, overseen by the remarkable Fred Woodward, is a knockout. But as Wenner's friend the entertainment magnate David Geffen says, "Let's put it this way: Jann is not a workaholic. Jann is committed to enjoying his life, and I think that's an extraordinarily worthwhile thing."

David Geffen. Barry Diller. Don Simpson. These and other Hollywood names are the ones that make Wenner's impishly pointy ears twitch. If you throw a high-powered party and seat Wenner among mere writers and journalists—even very celebrated ones—you will soon find him gazing yearningly elsewhere, toward whatever Kennedys may be sprinkled about, or, most often, toward the charmed circle of entertainment moguls; he considers himself more a part of their world than of his own. (Besides, he has an almost obsessive terror of the B table.) Not that his attentions are unwelcome. Geffen likes to have Wenner aboard his yacht for Caribbean trips; Wenner, meanwhile, has been generous with his airplane. Jann and Jane organize starry expeditions to the

...nner's Streak

Galápagos, fat-shedding trips to Arizona's Canyon Ranch, and family-oriented escapes to St. Barts. And lots of skiing. Last February alone, Wenner did Aspen with John Kennedy Jr., Gstaad with the celebrity hairdresser Frederic Fekkai, and, by helicopter, the Canadian Rockies with producer Don Simpson and a gaggle of other "competitors." Recording the fun is almost as crucial as having it. Wenner hires photographers to immortalize every second of derring-do, and in Canada, he says, "some of the ski instructors with us had these helmet cams, so they took about twenty-two hours of videotape. Don's having it edited down, and he'll add a rock sound track, so we'll have a little movie, you know, as a souvenir."

There have been accusations over the years that Wenner's friendships have interfered with his stewardship of the magazines—not just because he always seems to be away from the office, motorcycling with Jason Priestley or Billy Joel, but because these and other cronies seem to get more than their share of *Rolling Stone* coverage.

"I've never made anyone change a bad review into a good review or a good review into a bad review," Wenner argues, drumming his fingers on his desk. "I've never violated any real journalistic values, or done anything to jeopardize our credibility and honesty and integrity. Yes, I've absolutely done favors for my friends. I've put them in 'Random Notes' [the *Rolling Stone* gossip column], where maybe ordinarily they wouldn't have been. But nothing where it's some obvious fucking thing like a 'What the fuck is that doing in there,' you know?"

What about cover stories? I ask. Have there been too many devoted to his pals? "With covers, it's just more of the same," he says. And then an edgy pause. "You talking about, like, Billy Joel?"

Well, Billy Joel, Michael Douglas, Richard Gere..."O.K., you got the list. They probably each got one more cover than they might have deserved. But it's not like the old days." The old days? "Yeah, because in the old days, when the cover sales didn't matter all that much, fifteen years ago, we just threw something on there without really thinking about it. Now we are trying to run such a tight business around here, we have a cover meeting every week about it. For me to step in and violate those rules solely as a personal favor to anybody is just out of the question. Wouldn't even occur to me."

He stops for a moment, cocking his head to nibble on a nail. "You know, I certainly don't mind going in there and saying, I'm sorry, but I really believe that we just gotta make a gamble on this cover or that cover. And when I do, they always sell very well. Usually."

Not, however, on the most recent occasion, when at the eleventh hour Wenner swept the rap group Public Enemy off the January 23, 1992, cover to feature a rambling, scarcely coherent fantasy about Clarence Thomas and Elko, Nevada, by his old friend Hunter Thompson. As it happens, *Rolling Stone* has had exactly two rap-oriented covers—and one of those was devoted to (M.C.) Hammer, which most rap fans would agree doesn't count. Although it's anybody's guess how well Public Enemy might have fared on the newsstand, the Hunter Thompson cover sold abysmally.

Like most other magazines, *Rolling Stone* has been feeling the effects of the recession. Ad pages fell 14 percent last year, and newsstand sales dropped 19 percent in the year's second half. Still, Wenner thinks he'd like to start one or two new magazines during the nineties. "I think somehow that feels like a nice size. The company could be much bigger if I was that driven and ambitious. But I'm not interested in leveraging it and building an empire. I'd rather have my time of frivolity and playing with the children or skiing. I'd rather ride motorcycles."

Besides, Wenner isn't a corporate schemer; what moves him are his instincts. He conceived *Men's Journal* during a hike at Canyon Ranch, and because he wanted to read a magazine like it, he felt sure others would, too—recession or no recession. "I don't sit around and calculate what our readers will want," he says, "or what are people talking about, or what does the college market want these days—I don't do that at all. I just don't."

And now, watching him chatter and drum his fingers and fidget in his chair, I understand why—why he doesn't think about the market, why he doesn't consult studies or surveys. The reason goes to the core of the man. For if Wenner were to launch a magazine based on demographic analysis rather than on his own gut instinct, he would miss the pleasure of watching the world react to him—to him, not to his accountants and advertising managers: to Jann Wenner.

The more you observe him, the more you realize that to himself Jann Wenner is invisible. If he wants to catch a glimpse of his own existence, he has to make the world his mirror.

"I'm not a terribly self-examining person," he says. "I act very impulsively. I don't sit around really thinking out a lot of stuff. I just know what I want, and I know what people want. I know what appeals to me, and I know how things will play. I know what's right and I know what's wrong. And that's what works." His voice is rising now; he sounds jubilant, defiant.

"Ninety-nine percent of the people would love to do what I get to do. Ninety-nine percent of our readers would like to go motorcycle riding with Jason Priestley. I'm the lucky one."

He grins his king-of-the-playground grin. "And he turned me on to the Yamaha FZR1000. It's a great bike." □

True Grit

(Continued from page 143) room-service waiter brought in a huge silver tray with coffee and cookies and cinnamon-raisin toast. While we talked, a porter climbed a twelve-foot ladder to change a light bulb near the ceiling.

Soon she was stretched out on the sofa, free-associating on the interrelated subjects of good looks, ambition, femininity, and how she had fought her way out of trouble on *PrimeTime Live*. Until that show, Diane Sawyer had lived a charmed life in the world of television, rising in one short decade from a mere general-assignment reporter in Washington to the co-anchor of a major newsmagazine. Practically every man for whom she has ever worked—Van Gordon Sauter, William Paley, Don Hewitt, Larry Tisch, Roone Arledge, Tom Murphy—has considered her to be a great news star.

But it was equally true that Diane Sawyer has always been deeply ambivalent about her greatest assets—her glamour and toughness—despite the fame and fortune these qualities have brought her. A creature of television through and through, she has hated to be seen as slick and superficial. "I don't even have a hairdresser," she insisted at one point—

before I reminded her that I had seen her on half a dozen control-room monitors being attended to by a bevy of hairdressers.

"I don't care about clothes," she told me another time, after I mentioned that some of her former colleagues on *60 Minutes* had complained that she was obsessed with her wardrobe. "My sister comes to New York and shops for me. I'm terrible at shopping. I'd come back looking like Valentine candy—dressed in lavender and baby blue. I'm no good about color."

Or a third time: "I don't have the zest for rooting around in people's sex lives," she said—this from a Diane Sawyer who had recently managed to get Patricia Bowman to come on her program after a Florida jury had acquitted William Kennedy Smith of raping her. "They say, of course, the reason you didn't remember [certain details of the alleged attack] is that there was some kind of sexual interplay in the car, that you were taking off your panty hose there and your shoes," Sawyer challenged Bowman.

Sawyer seemed, in short, to have surprisingly little insight into herself. For a woman who always spoke in velvety smooth cadences, and who cared so obviously about using just the right word to express her every meaning, she could be tone-deaf to the pretentiousness of her pronouncements. For example, she predicted before the premiere of *PrimeTime Live* that she and Sam Donaldson would be "a sonata for harp and jackhammer." And she told me, "Sam wanted a kind of raucous town meeting, to reinvent a kind of daily news broadcast. I always dreamed of something like the opinion page of a newspaper, in which you'd have essays, the kind of analysis that would be provocative enough to present a thesis to help me figure out what I thought about a particular subject." To which I could only respond, "Take that, Nielsen ratings!"

She denied that she had tried to get Rick Kaplan fired from his post as executive producer of *PrimeTime Live*—she was only trying to line up a sort of co–executive producer to help him over the hump for a few months, she said—and that she had had a serious face-to-face confrontation with Kaplan in his office. Kaplan, it turned out, had a somewhat different memory of the affair.

"I was not aware that Diane was meeting alone with Roone to the extent that I learned later," Kaplan told me. "I think it's her strength that she gets on with management. It's a double-edged sword, of course. There were times when she wanted me off the show. She never told me directly. Others told me. Once or twice, I called her into my office and said, 'Look, you can choose to work with me or get them to replace me. That's up to you. I don't need to stay here if you don't want me around.' And she said, whatever people were saying, she was not trying to get me replaced.

"But it wasn't important to me," he continued, "because what was important was that things weren't going well on the air. I have great respect for on-camera people. It's their face. The audience blames *them,* not me. And if I had been in her shoes, I would have campaigned to get me fired."

"I've never understood why she needs to be seen in her own eyes as a tender plant," said Leon Wieseltier, the literary editor of *The New Republic* and one of Diane Sawyer's old friends. "She has risen to the top of a highly competitive, brutal profession, and yet she seems to prefer to be seen as an innocent. For someone as gifted as Diane, there are qualities more becoming than innocence. To her credit, she has a genuine awe of real brains, even to the extent of being sometimes too much of a sucker for profundity."

"She's a difficult person, and I've worked with them all," said a colleague. "I think that Diane is the most complex personality of them all. She has a lot of different levels to her. She's hard to get to know. She can be an incredible taskmaster. And then you can have a night out with her in which she's your best friend, and you can talk about people you're dating. And then you can have a conversation about politics—a very complex conversation, mind you. Why she's the way she is, I don't know. Maybe because she was never able to please her mother."

I asked Diane Sawyer about her reputation throughout the broadcast-news business for being a supreme office politician, a kind of TV Mme. Defarge.

"I don't know what all this criticism of me is about—this thing that I'm political, that I'm calculating," she said. "To be political and calculating means that you're nice to people who can help you and not nice to those who can't. Other than that, what's the difference between being calculating and being a polite person? Which is what I believe I am. Every few months I take everyone on *PrimeTime Live* out to the China Club and get a little drunk with the staff and dance. I love to dance with the camera guys. So, you can see how I get confused where all this criticism comes from. Sometimes I feel like I'm steering between the Scylla of bimbo and the Charybdis of bitch."

To prove her point, she showed me a poem that had been written about her by the ground-floor security guards in her office building, which ABC shared with *Penthouse* magazine. Immensely proud of her status as a sort of Penthouse Pet, she had had the poem framed and hung on her office wall. It read in part:

Oh so many have come and gone through this hallowed hall,
Yet none are as nice as you that any of us can recall.

There's Ted, Tom, Dan, Pete and Joan—
But I bet they never got a poem.

So from all the men who work on *Penthouse* ground,
It's our pleasure to have you around.

"There was a time when I was being treated like they were drop-kicking a puppy," Diane Sawyer said. And indeed, no one would have blamed her if she had quit during her darkest days on *PrimeTime Live*. But she stuck it out, and did everything she could to fix what was wrong with the show—and, perhaps more tellingly, what she perceived was wrong with herself. Two years into the program, she chopped off the famous honey-blond tresses that had so offended people when she dangled them over Boris Yeltsin's desk in the Kremlin.

"I was tired of all those things people were saying about my hair, and now it doesn't call attention to itself," she said, unaware of how droll it sounds that being tough in television means having the courage to cut your hair. "I was shedding a lot of things. I just wanted change."

At ABC News, her new bob was greeted with an almost biblical gnashing of teeth—as though Sawyer were some female Samson who would lose all her strength along with her locks. The hair drama is remembered thus: "Diane called me after she cut her hair," said Joanna Bistany, a vice president in the News division and Roone Arledge's longtime right-hand woman. "She was petrified to come over. She finally appeared, and I loved it. 'I didn't want to tell Roone,' she said. 'I thought Roone would faint.' So I called Roone for her, and I said, 'Are you sitting down? Diane's cut her hair.' And Roone said, 'Did anybody know she was going to do it?' " The answer was that Diane Sawyer, a woman who had once passively consented to wear clothes chosen for her by her boyfriend, and who still has her

sister choose clothes for her, had made the decision herself.

"Diane completely refashioned herself to be a tough feminist investigative reporter on women's issues—things like mammography and day care," said Ira Rosen, a senior producer who supervises most of the hidden-camera pieces that gradually became the signature of *PrimeTime Live*, and that have won for the show many of its journalistic awards. "When she was working on the televangelism piece last fall, there was a sixtieth-birthday party for Mike Nichols, and I went into her office and said, 'Why not go to the party?' How many sixtieth-birthday parties do you have for your husband? The next day I asked her, 'How was the party?' And she said, 'I missed it.' I said, 'Was your husband pissed?' 'No,' she said. 'Mike understands. It's show business.' "

People on the show noted that she was less reluctant than before to throw her weight around. "There isn't an anchor at this network who isn't a co-manager of their own show, and Diane is no exception," said Marc Burstein, a senior producer at *PrimeTime Live*. "Some people criticize Diane because she has too much power, but I think that if it's her name and her face on the program, then she's entitled to more say than would otherwise be afforded."

"If something goes wrong, Diane needs to blame someone, and in a sense Rick Kaplan was the fall guy," said a top member of the staff. "Diane's a second-guesser. She'd ask, 'Why did we have to do that piece last night? I can't understand why we're doing that kind of piece.'... Rick became a great absorber of her punches."

"Maybe Roone expected too much," Rick Kaplan said. "He took a shot. He had an extraordinary idea for this program and got an extraordinary commitment from Cap Cities. His concept was to bring in events from all over the world live.... His first miscalculation was that America was waiting for the pairing of Diane and Sam. We premiered to a 20 share. It wasn't working out. We couldn't go off the air for fear of forfeiting the Cap Cities commitment. I didn't want to blow this superb staff apart. I thought we had to do two shows at the same time—the one we were doing on any given Thursday, and the one we would be doing eventually. So we started changing the staff."

That meant getting rid of almost all of the assistant directors, as well as the expensive dollies and cranes that were used to give the show its unique look. It meant replacing many of the live-action producers with producers who knew how to do taped pieces. It meant taking away the audience behind the anchors little by little so that no one would notice. It also meant changing the set, warming up the lighting, and re-arranging the theme music so that it would be less orchestral and more intimate.

"Roone was consumed 95 percent of the time with trying to fix *PrimeTime Live*," said Irwin Weiner, Arledge's chief of financial operations, who left ABC last October after thirty years with the company. "The ratings were lousy, the advertising sales were not good, the affiliates weren't happy. Roone used to rag on everybody on the program. He started questioning every assignment. He was very involved in getting the mix of the show right. What do you lead with? What do you promo? Whatever Rick Kaplan did, Roone felt wasn't right. And all through this period, there was another saga, the Sam Donaldson saga—finding a role for Sam."

"In May 1990, we had dinner at Roone's favorite restaurant, Nanni Il Valletto," recalled Sam Donaldson. "It was Roone, Rick, me, and Diane. The three of us said to Roone, in our own words, 'Roone, life's too short; none of us needs this heart attack.' Roone agreed. He then brilliantly analyzed what was wrong with us. Sam and Diane didn't click. The pieces weren't compelling. The overall quality still fell short. He then came to me. 'There's this continuing problem of what you do,' he said. 'What is it you do?' Thank God, one thing I did well is the [*This Week with David Brinkley*] show. Well, Roone Arledge never gives what would be considered in the military a direct order. He wants you to do the right thing. At that time, Roone would have been delighted if I had walked the plank.

"After that dinner," Donaldson continued, "I sent a message that if Roone wanted me off the show he would have to say that and say it directly to me. I was determined to make it. I decided, Why don't I come back to Washington? I said to Roone, 'Diane should work alone. She works better when she doesn't have to share the stage.' But don't get me wrong. She never cut in on me or tried to ace me out."

She didn't have to. There was never any real competition between her and Donaldson, a point underscored when ABC didn't rush to meet Donaldson's demands when his contract came up for renewal this spring. "Diane made herself the story," said one of her friends. "She invented this character. She's what Lois Lane would have been if there were satellites. It's not the story of Yeltsin; it's 'Watch Diane get into the Kremlin building.' When you see Diane, you see someone who travels around the world reporting on terrible things. But the story is the contrast between her American innocence and the tawdriness she visits. The plot is a pure-blonde having a dirty adventure."

"Their show may still not have a real core or a sense of self," said a major executive at a competing network, "but let's face it, it's successful because you want to watch Diane push her pieces along through the sheer force of her personality."

In the fall of last year, just as television viewers finally began to notice the improvement in *PrimeTime Live*, Dan Burke, the president and C.E.O. of Cap Cities/ABC, got wind of the fact that Barbara Walters was holding secret meetings in her Park Avenue apartment with CBS chairman Laurence Tisch and his broadcast chief, Howard Stringer. Tisch had blood in his eye. For the past three years, he had been looking for the chance to strike back at ABC for stealing Diane Sawyer, and he told Barbara Walters that he was prepared to create a new magazine show for her on his network, which had recently become No. 1 in every ratings category but news.

Ultimately, Barbara Walters was persuaded to stay put at ABC—for a sweetened salary of reportedly almost $4 million a year—but her near loss confirmed Dan Burke in his belief that Roone Arledge, who was not known for his orthodox management skills, was so obsessed with Diane Sawyer and *PrimeTime Live* that he had not been minding the store.

"There was a certain date in Barbara's contract when we were supposed to open discussions," said Irwin Weiner. "She was getting tender. There was a psychological drama with her regarding Diane. There were conversations between her and Roone to that effect. Barbara felt we didn't love her. The implication was that Roone was not her champion anymore."

In a conversation I had with Barbara Walters, she dismissed as sexist any talk that she was engaged in a catfight with Diane Sawyer, a younger woman, or that Roone Arledge had made her feel unwanted. "I always hope I can get the interview," she told me, "and if I don't get it, I hope Diane gets it—not CBS and NBC. Listen, part of my reason for staying at ABC is my regard and personal affection for Roone." But it did not go unnoticed at *20/20*, where Barbara Walters reigned as the queen of the most popular hour-long show in the ABC lineup, that Roone Ar-

ledge was throwing choice stories to Diane Sawyer, the princess at *PrimeTime*.

"There was tremendous competition between *20/20* and *PrimeTime Live*," recalled Irwin Weiner. "The producers of *20/20* didn't feel too badly that Rick Kaplan and company were falling on their ass. This was evident at meetings in Roone's conference room. Comments were made, digs on pieces. Roone nurtured that creative tension. If Barbara Walters wanted to go after something, Diane got to him first. There was jealousy that Roone gave *PrimeTime Live* the Pan Am 103 investigation story."

The staff of *20/20* wasn't alone in wanting to see Roone Arledge fail. For years, the heads of the other divisions at ABC had resented the sybaritic Arledge for his chauffeured Bentley, his flights on the Concorde, and his sumptuous hotel suites, and they did little to disguise their hope that his troubles with *PrimeTime Live* would teach him a lesson in humility. "You walk into Roone's office," said Irwin Weiner, "and he's got Emmys wall to wall. He's won every prize there is. There is no other president in the company that has an office that looks like that. He creates this love-hate in the corporate structure."

These competitive feelings were only aggravated when the devout Catholic duumvirate that ran Capital Cities—the widely admired Tom Murphy and Dan Burke—bought ABC in 1986 and imposed their ascetic corporate culture. "Murphy and Burke went out of their way to have regular divisional presidents' meetings, and Roone never showed up," said someone familiar with Arledge's elusive style of operating. "He couldn't be bothered. He'd send Irwin Weiner or others. They felt it was a snub. And when his longtime number two, David Burke [no relation to Dan], went to CBS to be president of News, Roone made the big mistake of not replacing him with someone that the Cap Cities guys respected."

"Tom Murphy and Dan Burke are station operators who deal in managing costs," said a high-ranking executive at another network. "They run honest, clean stores with the lowest possible costs, and they also do what they need to do to be responsible citizens. . . . They're used to 50 percent profit margins in these local stations. None of that allows for any kind of excess. Roone Arledge has built a great news organization through expansiveness, competitiveness, leaving no stone unturned to make things better. To people like Murphy and Burke, that appears excessive."

It rankled the artist in Roone Arledge that Murphy and Burke were happy with *PrimeTime Live* from the outset, simply because it was cheaper to produce than the entertainment show it had replaced, and it drew higher ratings. A day of reckoning between Arledge and his bosses became inevitable when Tom Murphy, while remaining chairman, retired as C.E.O. and turned over the helm to Dan Burke at the very moment when the recession hit network advertising with a vengeance. Then the Gulf crisis sent news costs skyrocketing, and within months Cap Cities/ABC's stock plunged more than two hundred points, complicating any plans that Burke may have had for selling or merging the company when *he* handed over its day-to-day operations, which he reportedly planned to do in 1994.

> "There was a time when I was being treated like they were drop-kicking a puppy," says Sawyer.

"Murphy and Burke are guys who made a disastrous mistake buying ABC," said an investment banker involved in the media business. "They totally overestimated the potential for network television and underestimated cable. They found themselves with a huge turkey on their hands. The whole history of the company from that point on is how do they get control of this disaster. The structural problem they've got is that they're in a rapidly declining business."

Indeed, ABC had fallen into third place in entertainment and had practically given up competing in the money-losing arena of sports. The only category in which ABC was still first among the traditional networks was news, where Roone Arledge, despite his free-spending reputation, had consistently managed to make a profit for the company. And it was to that part of the business that Dan Burke now looked for salvation.

Roone Arledge was asked to trim $30 million to $40 million from his $275 million budget and come up with a strategic plan to turn ABC News into a lean organization capable of competing on a global scale. When Arledge and his financial sidekick, Irwin Weiner, failed to produce all that was asked of them, Burke turned to Stephen Weiswasser, a popular executive in the company who was being groomed for higher things, and asked him to become executive vice president for News. Weiswasser said he would only if he didn't have to report to Arledge.

"Burke gave Weiswasser a letter spelling out his mandate," said someone familiar with all the details of the affair. "In the letter, Roone would have total creative control, but if any dispute on any financial or business matter arose, Weiswasser would prevail. Roone refused to buy this, and he felt that if he made a real issue out of all of this Burke would have to back off. For his part, Burke told friends that he didn't believe that Arledge would quit, but he couldn't be sure. So they struck a compromise: if Arledge and Weiswasser ever failed to agree on an important matter, Burke himself would adjudicate."

It wasn't long before the corridors of ABC were ringing with gossip about how Arledge's wings had been clipped. People confirmed an embarrassingly accurate account that appeared in *The Washingtonian* magazine, in which the writer, Barbara Matusow, described how Arledge had tried at the very last moment to rewrite a press release so that it would state that Weiswasser reported to him, and how Weiswasser had flatly refused to allow it. They chuckled over another widely retailed story, of how Weiswasser had had a door installed in one wall of his office so that he would have equal access with Arledge to the News division's hallowed conference room. And they shook their heads in amazement over how the once mighty Roone was being forced against his will to put on an all-night newscast, à la CNN, and to come up with yet another newsmagazine—this one to compete directly on Sunday nights with Don Hewitt's powerhouse, *60 Minutes*. Weiswasser wanted to position ABC in that critical Sunday time slot for the day when Hewitt, sixty-nine years old, and Mike Wallace, seventy-four, retired. Arledge referred to the project as "the Charge of the Light Brigade."

"When *PrimeTime* succeeded in the toughest time period that then existed in television—Thursday night at ten—it cer-

True Grit

tified that this kind of programming was something special," Arledge told me in his office not long before he announced to his staff that he was entering the hospital to have an operation for prostate cancer. "The time period made everything a crisis to the News division. People were killing themselves, and every week you'd read that you were eighty-second, and we couldn't get guests to go on the show, and ABC couldn't understand our unhappiness. We wanted to be successful beyond the terms the company wanted.

"But Diane Sawyer has surpassed my aspirations," he went on. "She's done spectacular work. She's terrific when she fills in for Peter Jennings. She's terrific when she fills in on *Nightline*. She's going to do some specials in the future. She's extraordinary. And I don't think she's reached her potential yet."

Like Roone Arledge, many people spoke of Diane Sawyer's potential. "She is one of the rising talents in this business," Steve Weiswasser said. "She is good at what she does, and is going to get better. I perceive growth there." Indeed, it was one of the most curious facts about this woman that, at the age of forty-six and after nearly eight years of weekly exposure on *60 Minutes* and *PrimeTime Live*, she left people with the impression that there was still something to come, some indefinable oomph she had yet to deliver.

"Some people see Diane and they see the changing hairdos, the feigned sincerity, the cupping of her cheeks in her hands as if she has eyes only for the person she's talking to—all of which sometimes comes off as phony," said Ken Auletta, the author of *Three Blind Mice*, a study of the decline of network television. "She's well educated, obviously smart, talented, has more substance than some other men or women who have been promoted to host. But as a journalist she has some proving to do, I suspect, that holds her back among some people."

Others thought that, whatever her shortcomings, Diane Sawyer had such a broad range of talents that she could easily end up as the first woman to successfully anchor a nightly news show. Said Jeff Greenfield, her ABC colleague and a penetrating analyst of his own craft: "Is an extremely attractive, extremely successful woman doing a glamorous job, who is paid an enormous amount of money, and who's married to a famous director, going to be the object of jealousy? I would think so."

And Joan Cooney thought she understood what all this dissection of Diane was about. "There is something very aloof about Diane Sawyer, and everyone who is not her friend feels it," she said. "She is considered aloof, cold, and standoffish by an awful lot of people, and that doesn't help when you look like she does and have all that talent. When you're aloof, people fill in spaces with words like 'manipulative.' It always makes me laugh, because there's no truth to it."

"When Diane came here to ABC, she was just about at the top echelon of superstardom," said Rick Kaplan. "She was clearly edging into the level of Barbara Walters, Peter Jennings, Ted Koppel, and David Brinkley. Now she doesn't have to take a backseat to anyone. How far can she go? There's no stopping her—and I'd say that even if Diane Sawyer got me fired tomorrow." □

John Demjanjuk

(Continued from page 139) closely for a year. On November 14, 1979, O.S.I. attorney Norman Moscowitz interviewed Horn at his home in West Berlin. Moscowitz brought with him two sets of eight photographs, with a picture of Demjanjuk in each set. Three months later, on videotape, Moscowitz asked Horn to recount what had happened at their meeting.

Moscowitz: Would you describe, in your own words, how these photos were shown to you? . . .

Horn: First I was shown these larger pictures. . . .

Moscowitz: Did you in fact identify or recognize someone in those photographs?

Horn: Yes. This Ivan.

Moscowitz: Were you shown another set of photographs aside from these which we've just discussed?

Horn: Yes.

Moscowitz: When you looked at those photographs—this other set—where was this first set of photographs?

Horn: They had been removed again.

In short, a positive identification from a crucial witness, which placed Demjanjuk at Treblinka. There was just one problem. Horn's testimony was false.

John junior and Ed Nishnic found this out some years later, under most unusual circumstances. In the late 1980s, the O.S.I.'s janitor was in the habit of disposing of the agency's garbage in a dumpster at a McDonald's restaurant on K Street in Washington, D.C. Unbeknownst to the O.S.I., a Demjanjuk sympathizer was lifting the plastic garbage bags and turning them over to the family. Donning gloves and coveralls, John junior and Nishnic spent countless hours sifting through the refuse, sometimes having to tape together pieces of documents that had been ripped up.

In one bag they found, fully intact, the original set of reports prepared by O.S.I. investigator Bernard Dougherty Jr. and historian George Garand, both of whom had accompanied Norman Moscowitz to Berlin for the Otto Horn interview. Their reports, written a few days after that meeting, describe in mutually consistent detail what actually occurred.

When Horn was shown the first set of eight photographs, he "studied each of [them] at length but was unable to positively identify any of the pictures, although he believed he recognized one of them (*not DEMJANJUK*). . . . The first series of photographs was then gathered and placed in a stack, off to the side of the table—*with that of DEMJANJUK lying face up on top of the pile, facing HORN* [emphasis added]." Next, Horn saw a picture of Demjanjuk in the second stack and made the unsurprising observation that it was the "same person" as the man in the photo lying suggestively on top of the first stack. At long last, he identified Demjanjuk as Ivan of Treblinka.

To compound the injury, when Nishnic and John junior let it be known that they had found this incriminating garbage, the Justice Department launched an F.B.I. probe accusing them of theft of government documents. The matter was settled last July, when the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility concluded that the O.S.I. documents had been "lawfully recovered" from the dumpster on K Street. At the same time, the O.P.R. found no wrongdoing on the O.S.I.'s part—the documents had simply been "negligently discarded."

The state of Israel has long been frustrating to Nazi-hunters. Although it passed the Nazis and Nazi Collaborators Law in 1950, two years after Israel was founded, the statute has been little used. During the fifties a number of Kapos—Jews who had



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collaborated with the Nazis in the camps—were convicted, having foolishly settled in Israel. But until Demjanjuk was indicted in Israel in September 1986, only one non-Jew had been tried under the 1950 statute—Adolf Eichmann, chief engineer of Hitler's "Final Solution," who was convicted in 1961 and hanged. (Interestingly, the key legal issue with Eichmann was not identity but jurisdiction: he had been discovered in Argentina, and, rather than being extradited, was wrapped in a blanket by Israeli agents and kidnapped.)

Why was Israel so reluctant to conduct another war-crimes trial after Eichmann? "It's a question I've asked myself time and again," says Nazi-hunter Efraim Zuroff, head of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem. "Perhaps it's because the whole subject raises all sorts of painful issues—like why did six million Jews go like sheep to the slaughter?"

Zuroff did not fully appreciate Israel's ambivalence toward conducting Nazi trials until April 1983. Allan Ryan had recently left the O.S.I., and his successor, Neal Sher, arrived in Israel that month to discuss a denaturalized American named Valerian Trifa. He had been a leader of Romania's Iron Guard, and in that role had incited crowds to murderous pogroms of Jews in Bucharest. Sher asked if Israel would like to extradite Trifa. He received a prompt answer: no.

The conversation between the O.S.I. and Israel's Justice Ministry was held in secret, but Zuroff learned about it and leaked the story to the media. There was a furor, but the ministry defended its decision. Israel would not shrink from prosecuting Nazis, but a defendant had to meet three important criteria. First, he must have committed murder with his own hands. Second, he must be relatively young and in good health. And, third, there must be Jewish eyewitnesses to his crimes who were not living, inaccessibly, behind the Iron Curtain—and preferably they would be in Israel.

On October 18, 1983, the Israeli police issued a warrant for the arrest of a man who appeared to fit all the requirements—John Demjanjuk, also known as Ivan the Terrible. The request for extradition came a month later.

It had never occurred to Demjanjuk or his family that he might wind up in Israel. His great fear was that he would be deported to the Soviet Union and end up like Fedor Fedorenko—executed by firing squad. Ironically, Israel's decision to extradite Demjanjuk may have saved his life.

Demjanjuk was finally flown to Israel on February 28, 1986, after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear his appeal. He was held in Ayalon Prison awaiting trial for almost exactly one year, as a crack team of Israeli prosecutors prepared the case against him. The team was officially headed up by Yonah Blatman, who held a post akin to U.S. solicitor general, but the greatest share of the work fell to Michael "Mickey" Shaked of the Jerusalem D.A.'s office. Demjanjuk, for his part, was represented by Mark O'Connor, of Buffalo, New York, who would prove supremely inept. O'Connor in turn hired a Cleveland criminal lawyer, John Gill, and local Israeli counsel, Yoram Sheftel. With a legal system based on British colonial law, Israel has no jury trials—all cases are decided by judges. A panel of three judges was selected for the Demjanjuk case: Dov Levin, Zvi Tal, and Dalia Dorner.

There is no question that the trial was intended to be an educational tool. Though the defense never disputed the existence of Treblinka, or even of Ivan the Terrible, the first witness called by the prosecution was Dr. Yitzhak Arad, a Holocaust historian whose vivid description of the death camp and its origins set the tone for the rest of the trial. Arad began at the beginning, with the rise of the Nazi Party to power in 1933 and the adoption of the official policy of persecution of Jews, carried out in gradual stages—isolation, dispossession, annihilation. Soon after Nazi Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939, the SS was ordered to concentrate the Jews into large ghettos near railway lines. In January 1942, senior representatives of the Third Reich met at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin and laid out the practical steps to implement "the Final Solution." In accordance with the plan, three death camps were built in eastern Poland between February and July 1942: Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. These were quite unlike the concentration camps of Germany. They had few barracks because they were designed solely for extermination—the convoys of Jews who arrived would be dead within hours. Treblinka was the most horribly efficient of the three camps; in one year it would become a mass grave for more than 850,000 people.

Jews reached Treblinka after a one- to three-day train journey, crammed one hundred to a car, without food or water. On arrival, men and women were separated and ordered to undress in the lower camp, known as Camp One. The women's heads were shorn—their hair had industrial value to Nazi Germany. Then the naked prisoners were driven, to the crack of whips, along a narrow path connecting Camp One and Camp Two. The SS called this path the Himmelstrasse, or Road to Heaven. Once in Camp Two, the prisoners were forced, hundreds at a time, into the gas chambers. With the tightfitting doors bolted behind them, they were asphyxiated by the carbon monoxide fumes of the engine. Within a half-hour their bodies were untangled and removed, tossed into a burial pit, and covered with chloride. (Later, at Heinrich Himmler's orders, the corpses were burned instead.)

The only Jews not killed immediately were those selected on arrival to perform jobs, such as sorting clothing and possessions into neat piles. Jewish "barbers" shaved the women's hair, while "dentists" were ordered to pry gold teeth from the mouths of the dead. Other Jews were recruited as corpse carriers. During Treblinka's one year of operation, there were on average several hundred "work Jews" each day; many were killed and replaced, or committed suicide by hanging themselves with their belts. By the summer of 1943, the work Jews noticed that the gassings were slowing down, realized that Treblinka's mission was nearing completion, and surmised, correctly, that the SS planned to murder them as well. They revolted on August 2; several hundred escaped into the forest, but many of them were rounded up and shot. Only a few dozen managed to survive until after the war.

To help the thirty German SS men at Treblinka keep order, the Nazis employed about a hundred armed auxiliaries, mostly Red Army soldiers taken from P.O.W. camps and trained at Trawniki. Some of the Soviets worked as guards, but others were more directly involved in the killing. Among the latter were two men who helped operate the gas chambers in Camp Two—Ivan and Nikolai.

One of the work Jews who escaped in the August 2 revolt was Pinchas Epstein, who for eleven months had carried corpses in Camp Two. Only seventeen at the time, and a still-vigorous sixty-two at the Demjanjuk trial, he was the first to take the stand to impart his recollections of Ivan the Terrible. Epstein told how, on one occasion, twenty inmates suspected of plotting to escape were rounded up; Ivan tortured them by breaking their arms, hands, and legs with an iron pipe. Then they were all hanged.

Epstein next recounted an incident about which, he said, "I have nightmares . . . to this very day." He continued: "One day a living little girl managed to get out of the gas chambers. She was alive. She was speaking. A girl of about twelve or fourteen. People who took the corpses out of the gas chambers made her sit down on the side, and this little girl,

her words ring in my ears still. She said, 'I want my mother.'... Ivan took one young man from among us, whose name was Jubas. He struck him brutally with his whip, he lashed at him... and he ordered him, 'Take off your pants, and...' "—Epstein hesitated—" 'and *come fuck.*' ... And Jubas mounted this child, and this act, as I understand it, was not performed." The girl was shot instead.

At the end of his direct examination, Epstein identified John Demjanjuk, sitting in his wooden box behind the defense table, as the monster he had been describing. How could he be sure, Prosecutor Shaked asked him.

"I see Ivan every night. My poor wife, I dream about Ivan every night. I envision him every night, he is imprinted in my memory." Moments later, Epstein was glaring at Demjanjuk and pounding the witness stand in anger: "*There he is! There he is! There he is!*"

Four other Treblinka survivors took the stand to identify Demjanjuk as Ivan the Terrible. One of them, Yehiel Reichman, had worked as a "dentist" in Camp Two. Two others—Gustav Boraks and Josef Czarny—worked in Camp One and had far less exposure to Ivan than Epstein did. In addition, Boraks had grown a bit senile in the decade since he first selected Demjanjuk's picture from the Israeli-police photo spread. Nevertheless, all three made effective witnesses.

Eliyahu Rosenberg was probably the most important prosecution witness at the trial. His testimony ran three days and filled more than five hundred pages of transcript. Like Epstein, he had worked at Camp Two as a corpse carrier. Later, he became a *Bademeister*, one of the "shower cleaners" who washed blood from the gas chambers. He also had escaped in the August 2 revolt. One could see in Rosenberg, barely five feet tall yet a commanding presence, a man with the strength and cunning to survive.

Rosenberg testified that he had known Ivan well. One time, Ivan ordered him to copulate with a corpse—he was spared this ordeal by an SS officer—and, another time, Ivan took part in whipping him for stealing some bread. "I would see him holding a sort of sword in his hand," he added, "and sometimes he would cut off a piece of nose, a piece of ear. stab, you just cannot comprehend why, why." Religious Jews, with beards and sidelocks, seemed particularly to provoke him. Ivan dispatched one such elderly man by placing his head between strands of barbed wire and beating him until he was strangled.

The most dramatic moment, perhaps, of the entire trial occurred when Rosenberg was asked for an in-court identification of the accused. He requested that Demjanjuk remove his glasses. Demjanjuk did so, then stood up and made his own request: would Rosenberg stand face-to-face with him and get a really close look? The courtroom fell silent as Rosenberg strode over to Demjanjuk's wooden box. Suddenly, Demjanjuk said, "*Shalom!*"—hello in Hebrew—and with an idiotic grin thrust out his hand. Rosenberg recoiled in horror, screaming in Yiddish, "Murderer! Bandit!" In the third row, Rosenberg's wife fainted.

Rosenberg returned to the witness stand, trembling. "Ivan," he declared. "I say so unhesitatingly and without the slightest doubt. This is Ivan from the gas chambers. The man I am now looking at. I saw his eyes. I saw those murderous eyes. I saw that face of his. How *dare* you put out your hand to me, murderer that you are?"

There was one problem with Rosenberg's testimony: in two separate statements, in 1945 and 1947, he had described how Ivan the Terrible had been killed in the August 2 revolt. But Rosenberg explained that he had not actually seen this occur, only heard about it, and attributed his prior testimony to wishful thinking. Yitzhak Arad, the Holocaust historian, endorsed this explanation, and in its verdict the district court accepted it fully.

Yoram Sheftel, Demjanjuk's Israeli lawyer, wanted to ask Dr. Arad if the survivors' identification of the accused might, too, be wishful thinking. But Judge Levin disallowed the inquiry.

"That is a question," Levin said, "for a psychologist, not a historian."

The Treblinka survivors made such powerful witnesses that a savvy defense attorney might not have cross-examined them at all, choosing instead to challenge their testimony by putting memory experts on the stand. But Mark O'Connor, Demjanjuk's lead counsel, was far from savvy. He spent hours interrogating each one, making them only more sympathetic. He even asked Epstein to point out, on a scale model of Treblinka, the spot where his brother was killed.

Worse, O'Connor raised the ultimate taboo subject—the line between victim and participant. The overwhelming guilt felt by death-camp survivors is a well-recognized phenomenon. "It's a tragic thing," notes Israeli columnist Tom Segev, "but to stay alive they were forced to take part in the process of extermination." Rosenberg, for example, was required to put sand under the doors of the gas chambers to keep the deadly carbon monoxide from escaping. And it was Rosenberg who bore the brunt of O'Connor's crude line of inquiry.

First, O'Connor led Rosenberg through an account of how a group of naked prisoners had tried to escape through a fence. They were immediately caught and subjected to a special torture, placed in a gas chamber filled with chlorine. The next morning, when Rosenberg helped remove their red and bloated bodies, the skin came off in his hands.

Then O'Connor sprang his question: "Mr. Rosenberg, was it ever in your heart at the time you were watching this happen to try and do something to *help* those men that were running outside naked?"

Rosenberg looked stricken. He could not seem to believe his ears. "In what manner could I help these people?" he said at last. "How? With what? *With what?* With *screaming?* Should I have screamed at them: *'Don't get into those gas chambers!'*? They didn't *want* to get into the gas chambers! And if, God forbid, any of us would have screamed... I don't wish you, Mr. O'Connor, to even *look* at what would have happened to such a person. They would have shoved me straight alive into a pit full of blood. So don't ask me questions of that manner, Mr. O'Connor, I *implore* you. You weren't there. I was there." In a crescendo of agitation, Rosenberg pointed to Demjanjuk: "Ask *him!* Ask *him!* Let *him* tell you! Let *him* tell you what he would have done to me!... I was never asked such a painful question in my life!"

The Demjanjuks had hired Mark O'Connor back in 1983 at the recommendation of his father, Edward, a defense witness at the denaturalization trial. A former Vietnam captain, Mark was dashing, with blue eyes, a square Irish jaw, and bright-red hair—occasionally made brighter with dye. The family never checked his credentials; years later, Susan Adams of *The American Lawyer* retraced O'Connor's steps in Buffalo and found that he had "little if any experience as a trial lawyer" before taking on Demjanjuk as a client. (O'Connor insists that he has litigated criminal and civil cases in Erie County, New York, for nearly twenty years, but in an interview was unable to name a single judge he had appeared before.)

O'Connor did not appear to want to share the defense spotlight, though he

clearly needed to hire Israeli co-counsel, at the very least to instruct him on the nation's law. Although he did consult briefly with one respected Israeli law professor, that alliance soon faltered, and O'Connor waited until one month before the official start of the trial to hire local counsel.

The attorney O'Connor chose, Yoram Sheftel, was, in his own words, "definitely the most hated criminal lawyer in prosecution circles in the country—and *proud* of it." Short and slight, bearded, and utterly fearless, Sheftel, forty-three, is one of the few Israelis to drive a Porsche 924 Turbo, and probably one of the fewer still to wear love beads. Before taking the Demjanjuk case, his claim to fame was helping Meyer Lansky obtain a tourist visa.

"I admired Meyer Lansky all my life," says Sheftel, who keeps three gilt-framed photos of himself with the gangster on his office wall. "He represented to me a different type of a Jew. A Jew who was not afraid of the goyim, who was tough and rough, totally different from the Jews in the Diaspora. The fact that he was accused of breaking the law even in the fiercest way possible in the U.S. didn't interest me at all—it's a goyish country.... The only people who would have been dead in Treblinka if every Jew was like Meyer Lansky would be the Ukrainians and Germans—there wouldn't *be* any Treblinka."

Sheftel and O'Connor quickly became enemies. "Within two months," Sheftel says, "I realized that he's a *complete* schmuck, and that he's done nothing for five years, complete and total *nothing*. Didn't have *one* witness, didn't know properly even the alibi of Demjanjuk. His prime interest was to participate, on television, live, in the case of the century. The *day* before the case started, he asked me to prepare urgently a motion that a TV monitor be put on the defense table so he can see how he's looking!"

Indeed, from his opening statement to the court, O'Connor appears to have mistaken himself for Maximilian Schell in *Judgment at Nuremberg*. "If this is only the second time in history, with regard to the State of Israel, the young State of Israel, that the sword of St. Michael has been taken out in the use of long-arm jurisdiction to bring back into the House of Zion an international criminal...what then does the world do with the precedent that's been set down by this tribunal, by this legal Sanhedrin?" he asked.

O'Connor was somewhat less grandiloquent in addressing Sheftel, whom he more than once ordered, in full hearing of the court, to "sit down and don't get up again." On occasion, O'Connor would switch off Sheftel's microphone in midsentence. Another time, he jabbed a pencil in Sheftel's face and hissed, "Turkey, get in your Porsche and go back to Tel Aviv!"

By May 1987, as the prosecution was winding up its case, Ed Nishnic and John junior had concluded that Mark O'Connor had to be fired. There was one big obstacle: O'Connor had convinced Demjanjuk that he alone stood between his client and the gallows. Finally, in July, Vera was brought to Demjanjuk's cell and persuaded him to go along with the family's decision. A few days later it was made official. O'Connor was out.

> "I would see him cut off a piece of nose, stab, you just can't comprehend why, why."

In retrospect, John junior and Ed Nishnic say, the one benefit of Mark O'Connor was that his "substandard defense" forced them to learn the case. O'Connor, who was paid at least a half-million dollars for his efforts, scoffs at the criticisms raised by the Demjanjuk family and Sheftel, and echoed by John Gill, the Cleveland lawyer. "It's sour grapes," he said, "because *they* did such a tragic job." He declares, "My defense speaks for itself."

Gill assumed the role of lead counsel, and within a week called his first defense witness: John Demjanjuk. Asked by Gill whether he had ever killed a person in his life, Demjanjuk replied, "Never. I cannot even kill a chicken." But in seven days on the stand, most of it in cross-examination, Demjanjuk found his alibi reviewed, dissected, and debated until there was little left of it.

In February 1988, a year after the trial had begun in earnest, the lawyers gave their summations. John junior had sat quietly throughout the trial, the only family member to attend every session. But in the middle of Mickey Shaked's summation, the strain finally got the better of him. He jumped from his seat and stalked out the door, yelling to Shaked, "You're a damn liar. You son of a bitch!" The outburst unhinged Vera Demjanjuk and Irene Nishnic, also in court that day; they, too, began to scream, and had to be escorted from the room. Throughout the entire spectacle, John Demjanjuk Sr. sat impassively, smiling.

The three judges deliberated for two months, and in April 1988 produced a guilty verdict that runs 768 pages in the English translation. The death sentence followed one week later.

Under Israeli law, any capital case is automatically reviewed by the Supreme Court. It is the only court of appeals in Israel above the district level, and also doubles as a court of equity. It consists of twelve justices, of whom one, three, or five are selected to hear a given case. It differs greatly from American appellate courts in readily accepting new evidence. Five judges were chosen to hear the Demjanjuk appeal, including the court's president, Meir Shamgar. Leading the prosecution was Mickey Shaked. John Gill had quit the defense, leaving Yoram Sheftel alone and in charge. With no one around to switch off his microphone, Sheftel would prove a major irritant to the prosecutors and judges. "You are in a court and not in a theater," Justice Menachem Elon snapped at one point.

Sheftel had not intended to argue the appeal alone. In mid-1988, he had recruited Dov Eitan, a highly respected former district-court judge, who had been forced to resign from the bench in 1983 after signing a petition calling for Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon. (Israeli judges are not supposed to meddle in politics.) On November 29, 1988, one week before the appeal was scheduled to begin, Eitan had breakfast with his wife, Miriam. "We made a date for eleven o'clock to go and buy a new suit for the appeal," she recalls. "At eight he left to go to the office. At half past eight, he was dead."

Eitan had taken the elevator to the fifteenth floor of a building one block from his office and jumped out the window—or so the police ruled following a brief investigation that did not include an autopsy. Miriam does not believe that her husband was pushed, but says he had been receiving death threats for agreeing to take the Demjanjuk case, and may have been co-

erced into jumping by a blackmailer threatening to expose what she will describe only as a "personal matter." One of Eitan's daughters, Ricky Zehavi, says her father never recovered from being forced to resign from the bench, and thinks this is a more probable suicide motive.

There was more high drama to come. At Eitan's funeral, on December 1, Yisrael Yehezkeli, a seventy-year-old man who had lost much of his family at Treblinka, confronted Yoram Sheftel and threw acid in his face. Sheftel's left eye was severely damaged, but he eventually regained most of his sight through corneal surgery. Yehezkeli, whom Sheftel calls "a victim of the press campaign against me," got three years.

John junior says that the death of Dov Eitan, whom he and Nishnic considered "brilliant," was his moment of greatest despair. And yet the suicide, along with the acid attack on Sheftel, may have inadvertently saved Demjanjuk from hanging. Because of those two incidents, the Supreme Court appeal was put off for a year and a half. And during that time Nishnic and John junior stepped up their search for Ivan the Terrible.

In September 1990, John junior traveled to Simferopol, on the Crimean peninsula, along with Yoram Sheftel and two Ukrainian supporters. It was in Simferopol that Fedor Fedorenko had been tried and executed for war crimes at Treblinka. Perhaps the trial records would contain testimony about Ivan the Terrible. Fedorenko's lawyer hung up on them, but then John and his colleagues dropped in on the judge who had heard the case and sentenced Fedorenko to death. John, who speaks Ukrainian, explained why the records were so important to him. The judge was sympathetic. He said he would retrieve the file from the Simferopol K.G.B. and present it to them the next morning. "It seemed too incredible to be true," John says.

It was. The next morning, the judge informed them that the K.G.B. would not release the Fedorenko file. But in November, after John and his search party had gone home in frustration, Alexander Yemetz, a sympathizer in the Ukrainian Parliament, was able to get the file transferred from Simferopol to the K.G.B. office in Kiev, where he read portions of it. The file contained twenty-one confessions of former Treblinka Soviets taken by the K.G.B. between 1944 and 1961. They had been asked to describe in detail the activities of all Red Army defectors at the camp. Each of the statements, of course, mentioned Fedorenko. And every one of them also spoke of the gas-chamber motorman named Ivan. All agreed that his last name was Marchenko.

The existence of the Fedorenko file somehow reached the ears of Prosecutor Mickey Shaked; the Demjanjuk family has never learned the source of the leak. Without the knowledge of either Sheftel or the Israeli Supreme Court, Shaked traveled to Moscow that December. Somehow, Shaked had persuaded the Soviets to transfer the Fedorenko file to Moscow from Kiev. When he read the file, Shaked must have realized that the case against Demjanjuk, on which he had worked so diligently for five years, was in serious jeopardy. (Shaked declined to be interviewed.)

Shaked returned to Israel without the file, but by March 1991 had a copy in his possession. For the next five months, despite repeated requests, Shaked refused to provide a copy to the defense. He finally relented, Ed Nishnic says, after Demjanjuk threatened a hunger strike. ("I can swear to you that's not true; I never heard about a hunger strike," says Dafna Bainvol, Shaked's co-counsel. The reason for the delay was that the file had to be translated from Russian to Hebrew. "It's very tough work.") In August 1991, the Fedorenko file was accepted into evidence by the Israeli Supreme Court. Over the next several months, additional confessions taken from Treblinka Soviets between the 1940s and the 1970s were forthcoming. To date there are sixty-one statements in the Supreme Court's hands.

The statements indicate that the witnesses at the Demjanjuk trial did not exaggerate Ivan the Terrible's deeds in the slightest. But they consistently describe the operators of the gas chambers as Ivan Marchenko and Nikolai Shelayev. Perhaps the most significant confession is one signed by Shelayev himself. He states that in June 1943, two months before the Treblinka revolt, he and his comrade from the gas chambers, Ivan Marchenko, were transferred to Trieste, Italy, to guard political prisoners. Shelayev last saw Marchenko in the spring of 1944, when Ivan defected to the Yugoslav Communist partisans. His whereabouts after that are unknown. Though Marchenko could still be alive, no government agency or Nazi-hunting group has made any apparent effort to find out. (Shelayev was executed by the Soviets in 1951.)

Meanwhile, Nishnic and John junior received other documents that were, to them, the most shocking of all. Congressman James Traficant Jr., a sympathetic Democrat from Youngstown, had made a Freedom of Information Act request on their behalf, asking for Justice Department records on Fedorenko. He was given cables indicating that between 1978 and 1981 Justice had acquired, via diplomatic pouch from Moscow, excerpts and possibly the full text of some of the *same* confessions that have now turned up in the Fedorenko file. Traficant even obtained one of the excerpts that Justice had in its files in 1978, from a Pavel Leleko, who recalled that the two Soviets who ran Treblinka's gas chambers were named "Nikolai" and "Marchenko"—and that this Marchenko was known for severing the breasts of women. At the very least, Justice failed to pursue this significant lead.

As more and more information poured out of the Soviet Union, Nishnic learned that Ivan Marchenko had come from the Dnepropetrovsk region of the Ukraine. Last December he went there with Jaroslaw Dobrowolskyj, a Ukrainian-born attorney from Detroit. In the city of Kryvy Rog, they found the apartment of Marchenko's wife, Kateryna Krawtschenko, and younger daughter, Kateryna Kovalenko. To their dismay, they learned that the wife had died forty days earlier, and that Kovalenko had been a mere infant when her father went off to war, never to return. However, Kovalenko promised to scrounge for a photograph, and directed the two men to her older sister, Halyna Marchenko, who also had barely known her father. Halyna was repulsed when made to understand the nature of Nishnic's mission. "She said, 'There must be some mistake, my father was a *good* man,' " Nishnic recalls. "Then, with tears running down her face, she said, 'Mama, I'm so happy you're gone, not to hear what I'm hearing now.' It was heartbreaking."

On January 14, 1992, Nishnic returned to the Soviet Union en route to Israel, to pick up Marchenko's wedding photo, which Kovalenko had finally found. When it was placed side by side with John Demjanjuk's 1951 immigration photo—the one used in the Israeli-police photo spread—the similarities were striking: round face, short neck, protruding ears.

What did the survivor eyewitnesses have to say about Demjanjuk now?

Pinchas Epstein said, "I don't know nothing. I won't speak. After the trial I will speak."

Eliyahu Rosenberg had this to say:

"My kishkes [Yiddish for guts] turn over that, four years after his death sentence, he's still alive, this mamzer [bastard]."

Josef Czarny said, "I hope the judges will reject the appeal. I hope this on behalf of all the victims of Treblinka who cannot speak. If, God forbid, the prosecution should fail, it would be terrible."

If the survivors still want John Demjanjuk to be punished, they are not alone. "We are going to prove to the Supreme Court," says Assistant Prosecutor Dafna Bainvol, "that he is a Nazi war criminal who was *at least* in Sobibor and Flossenburg." Thus, in seventeen years, the case against Demjanjuk has come full circle, back to the two original wartime locations alleged by Soviet authorities in 1975.

There has always been a documentary case for putting Demjanjuk at Sobibor. Not only does the posting appear on the Trawniki ID card, but statements from a confessed Sobibor guard named Ignat Danilchenko describe an Ivan Demjanjuk at that death camp. Demjanjuk once even listed Sobibor on a form as a place where he'd spent part of the war. (His explanation: he'd picked the town randomly off a map to reinforce the idea that he was Polish and thus avoid repatriation to the Soviet Union. And, anyway, he thinks he meant to say *Sambor*.)

The case for Flossenburg is supported by documents that just recently turned up, says Prosecutor Shaked, in German archives. One of these is a Flossenburg logbook that shows a Demjanjuk—no first name—receiving a Czech-made sidearm. More persuasive are two other Flossenburg documents, both of which again list a Demjanjuk with no first name, but with the serial number 1393. This is the same serial number that appears on the Trawniki ID card.

But if Demjanjuk was at Sobibor and Flossenburg, what specifically did he do there? Did he ever kill with his own hands? This may prove impossible to answer because, to date, no survivor from either camp has stepped forward and claimed to remember him. There are only about twenty living survivors of Sobibor. One of these, Dov Freiberg, who was assigned to polish the Ukrainians' boots at the death camp, has no recollection of Demjanjuk. "If he was in Sobibor," Freiberg says, "he must have been small, maybe a short-timer. If he was one of the big sadists, destroying the people, I think I would remember him."

Mickey Shaked, however, seems to have decided on his own what Demjanjuk did at those places. During one hearing before the Supreme Court, he declared, "There is no moral difference whether Demjanjuk pushed one Jewish child into the gas chamber at Sobibor or at Treblinka." At another hearing, he wove this fanciful description of Demjanjuk: "Day in and day out...he donned his uniform, he took his pistol, put his gun on his shoulder as well, and stood there in his warm clothing and watched the people barefoot marching to the gas chambers and made sure that none of them got away. And even in Flossenburg...he served as [the Nazis'] henchman with the self-same smile that we see across his face here in the hall."

Not surprisingly, John junior calls it an outrage that, after sixteen years of being accused of the crimes of Ivan the Terrible, his father should now have to answer to a different set of charges. Charges, moreover, which John junior insists have no merit.

But what if his father *did* serve at a death camp?

From his well-considered answer, it appears that John junior has, on some level, already accepted the possibility. "If my father were to stand up today and say, 'I lied, I was a guard someplace,' I would have to put that into the context of what happened during World War II," he says. "Knowing what P.O.W. camps were like —at Chelm, where he testified he was, where people were dying from typhus, dysentery, and starvation. Does a boy put in a position like that, given the opportunity to have a real meal and put meat on his bones, and faced with a choice of living or dying—is he morally wrong for choosing the option of living? Is he any more culpable than the Jew that made the decision to live and spent twelve months pulling gold out of the mouths of corpses? I don't think so."

Most Israelis would likely be offended by this analogy, and it is not a valid defense under the 1950 Nazi war-crimes statute. A Ukrainian auxiliary's presence at a Nazi camp, whatever the reason, makes him guilty of collaboration. But John junior's provocative question has become the unspoken subtext of the case—evoking the same debate over the cost of survival that brought enormous pain to Eliyahu Rosenberg on the stand. It is surely the reason why the state of Israel has never sought to prosecute a collaborator not known for sure to have committed hands-on murder. And why Israel probably now wishes it had never heard of John Demjanjuk. □

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GEMINI ♊ *May 21–June 21*

It's great to gallivant all over creation and still find someone chopping vegetables when you come home. But slow down. Saturn goes retro in your 9th house at the end of May. Venus and Mercury enter Gemini on May 25 and 26, respectively, and with the new moon on the 31st, you should be flying into June less freaked out about money and more in control of your life. During the second week of June, however, you'll experience what astrologers call "the finger of God." That could mean a divine hand guiding you or a celestial proctoscope. Consider it your personal version of Dungeons & Dragons.

CANCER ♋ *June 22–July 22*

Love, sex, and friendship—this month try to enjoy a major mishing and mashing of all three. And pay no attention to any intermittent panic attacks, even while Saturn is starting to creep backward in your 8th house at the beginning of June. Granted, in the past few years, people have been dropping into your life by parachute and out through a trapdoor, so it's natural to be a little jumpy. Through it all, loyal pals who live nearby are there to meet you for coffee, and hash over your whole soap opera while sharing a piece of chocolate cake. And these have to be the little moments that make life worth living.

LEO ♌ *July 23–August 22*

Stress—you adore it. Jupiter is moving forward in your 2nd house, which means an easing of recent financial pressures. During May, there's a major grand square going on with the new moon and Venus in Taurus, Saturn, and Pluto, and *that* means you'll be juggling your butt off. You could hit it big now *if* you get the support of key people who are (a) unimpressed with your thousand and one charms, and (b) so wrapped in their own lives they can't get worked up over your incessant needs. Your challenge is to see how long you can go on caring for the wounded without stopping to check your hair in the mirror.

VIRGO ♍ *August 23–September 22*

Virgos are often cynical, but at the moment you have good reason to feel on top of the world. It's not every month that Jupiter goes forward in your sign. In fact, it happens only every twelve years. The last time was 1979–80, so think back to see how cynical you've become since then. Saturn will be crawling backward in your 6th house now to teach you two things: (1) Eat right, for if you feed the engine premium fuel, it will run like a dream. (2) If you think work is boring, unrewarding, or beneath you, think again. Many of the brightest stars in Hollywood have to cope with their own laundry.

LIBRA ♎ *September 23–October 23*

With Jupiter in your 12th house, Saturn in your 5th, and Mars in Aries until June 14, notice how the issue of aggression is played out in all your relationships. Instead of just thinking that everyone is an irresponsible child having a tantrum, try asking yourself some serious questions. Why do people get mad at you? Who really starts it? Do you get other people to make the first move and then punish them for not consulting you? Is there truth in the belief that beneath all the polite, civilized napkin-dabbing Librans are famous for, a primitive animal is baring its teeth? And why do you love aggressive people?

SCORPIO ♏ *October 24–November 21*

Relationships and sex are luscious items on *anybody's* menu, and the new moons of May 2 and May 31 should provide you with many weeks of both. Do not fall prey to separation anxiety and fear of abandonment. The passage of the sun, moon, and Venus in Taurus opposite Pluto in Scorpio should give you back the old thrill of talking a wary consumer into buying your wares. One more thing: Jupiter's going forward and Saturn's going retrograde raise the old issue of family again. You want one, of course, but it drains you. Here's your summer mantra: Make new friends but keep the old. One may be silver, the other gold-plated.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ *November 22–December 21*

Sagittarians want to be everywhere at once. For the moment, content yourself with being able to visit lots of places for short spells. Jupiter's going forward in your 10th house in early May and the passing of the sun, moon, and Venus through your 6th will ground you now and give you that rare blend of focus, loyalty, and discipline that is sure to bring applause, despite the fact that you have a serious case of ants in your pants. A word about your siblings: If there appears to be a breakdown of all but the most superficial communication, do you stop talking altogether? Or start being real and risk major hurt on both sides?

CAPRICORN ♑ *December 22–January 19*

Anxiety over the economy isn't going to disappear immediately, so relax and enjoy your nervousness. Saturn, your beloved planetary ruler, goes retrograde at the end of May. Besides the fact that the knees of all Capricorns knock at the mere mention of money even in good times, the Uranus-Neptune conjunction has helped you throw away security and revamp your whole value system—more in terms of social contribution and less in terms of what the Joneses will think. This is a big step in your evolution. So get out and party, even if your throat constricts every time you have to shell out for a lousy movie.

AQUARIUS ♒ *January 20–February 18*

In late April, Uranus and Neptune went retro in your 12th house, and with planets passing through your 4th during May you want to stay close to your own bed and bathroom, and not throw good money at a waiter for a pasta dish you can boil up at home. The retrograde motion of Saturn in early June will make you even more reflective and—gag—introspective. With the new moon on May 31, *get out of the house*. Wave to the neighbors. Live a little. Even Aquarians, for whom astrology doesn't work half the time because they represent such colossal deviation, are subject to the celestial vibrations once in a while.

PISCES ♓ *February 19–March 20*

Jupiter's forward motion in your 7th house in early May brings accolades from peers, support from fans, renewal of vows, and floods of offers and opportunities. You are definitely not alone. In fact, Mother Teresa herself would come over and make pancakes if you would only call. Inwardly, though, Saturn's moving retrograde deep in your 12th at the end of May can effect a strange sadness and resignation in your behavior, a belief that life has gone by, so why bother? When friends show up at the door with pizza and champagne, *must* you be in your bathrobe watching a video of *The Sorrow and the Pity*?

ARIES ♈ *March 21–April 19*

From May 5 until June 14, Mars, the planet that rules mercenary soldiers, gun manufacturers, and New York City cabdrivers, is passing through Aries. Expect your normal yell to rise to the thousand-decibel level. You won't be sleeping much, because your metabolic rate will match the speed of a *Star Trek* warship. If you're a normally well-balanced Aries with decent controls, this will be a high-energy period. If you're a mousy type, speak up and don't get stepped on. If you're a raging manic screamer, the best thing to do is tire yourself out moving heavy furniture and then just quietly collapse in the corner.

TAURUS ♉ *April 20–May 20*

The retrograde of Saturn presses down on you, possibly in the form of a network president who cares more about the Nielsen ratings than about your art *or* your magnetism. If you still need recognition from an authority figure, get real. There are moments to beat your head against the wall of the Establishment and moments to enjoy love and all that goes with it. It's time for the latter. Venus in your sign gives you beauty and the stamina to fend off seductive gold diggers. Ignore the cynic who tells you it is better to be loved for your money than not to be loved at all. As long as your signature is required on the check, no sweat.

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The summer season leaps out of the gate this month at Royal Ascot. But while Elizabeth II weighs what to do about her wayward brood, social queen Elsa Maxwell, here crowned by royal photographer Cecil Beaton, always knew how to sit *very* firmly on her throne. An Iowa-born "faded beauty by the age of four," whose tutor was hanged for murder, Maxwell became what George Bernard Shaw called the "eighth wonder of the world." She was censured twice by Parliament for her licentiously madcap soirées, conferred with everyone from Eleanor Roosevelt to the Duke of Windsor, and was deemed by Dr. Freud "a healthy woman who would never have neuroses." And while she may seem a more apt icon for the eighties, pioneering as she did a P.R. and "charity ball" boom, Maxwell also set the tone for recessionary chic. "The best parties are given by those who can't afford them," she claimed, and demonstrated it by being evicted from her two-room flat on the same night she opened her Parisian boîte with headliner Josephine Baker. And she partied heartiest for suffragettes and the French Resistance—which proves she wasn't just another reveler without a cause.

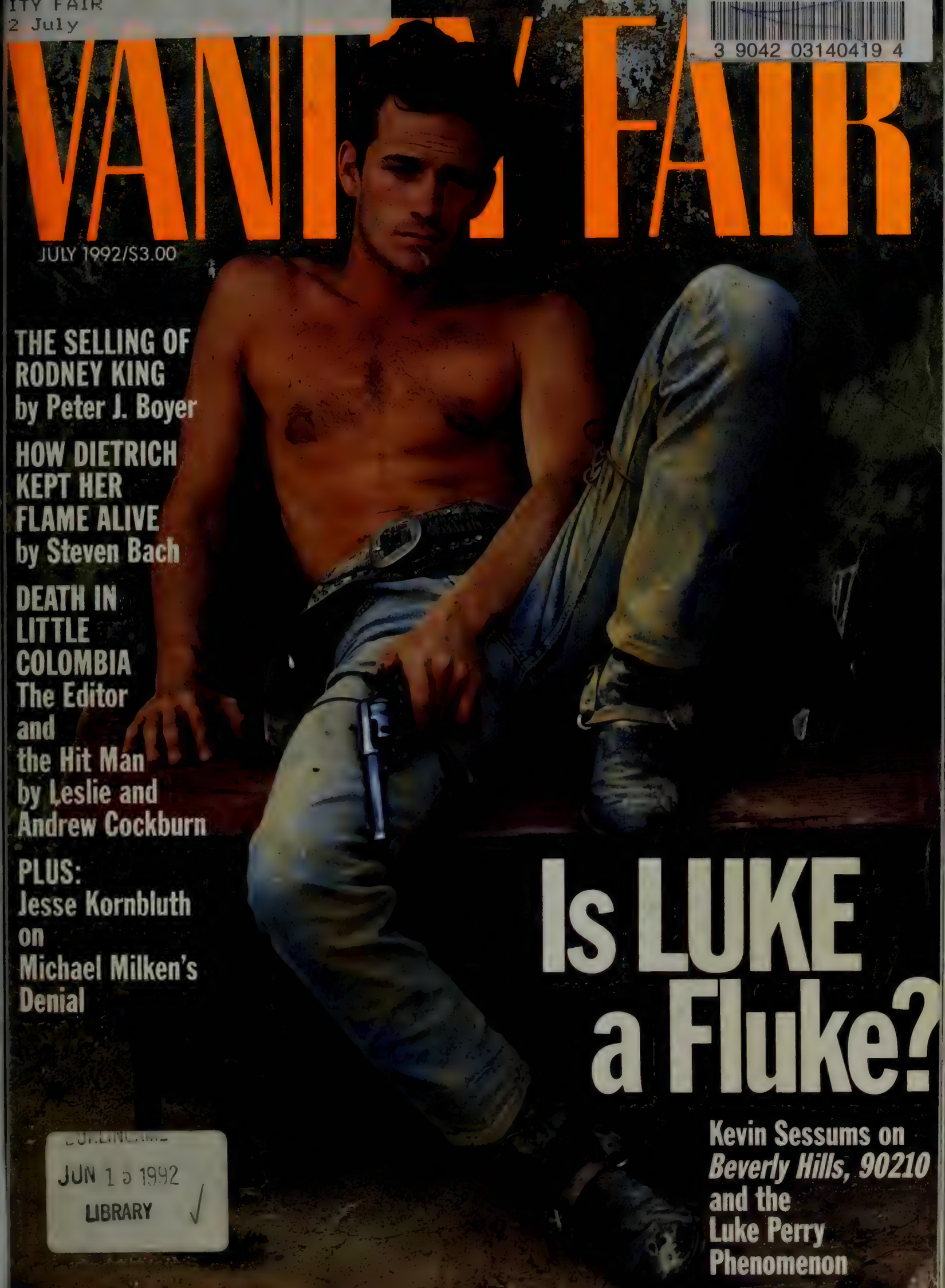
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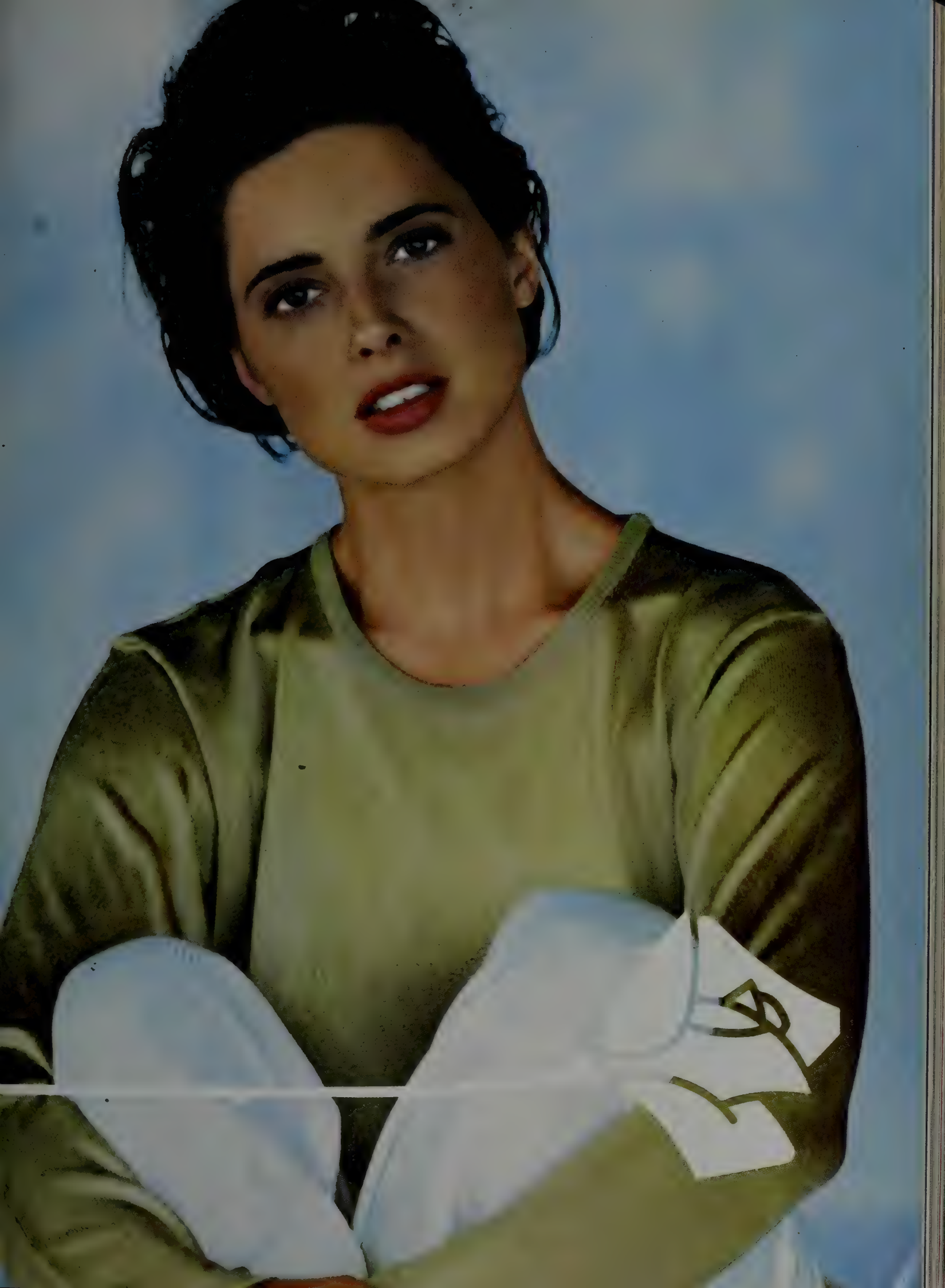
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Editor's Letter

"The Untouchable"



TIM SHEAFFER

"Even if this costs me my life." The apparently vainglorious flourishes that Manuel de Dios Unanue attached to his journalism were validated last March by two bullets in his head as he sat in a restaurant in New York's Little Colombia. The conclusion about his murder had a similar lethal velocity: as a crusader trying to drive drugs and corruption from New York's Hispanic community of three million people, he had clearly been silenced by the *sicarios,* the young men who kill for the Colombian cocaine cartels for as little as $200 a hit. If so, it was a unique killing, and the sense of outrage was well founded. Open season may have been declared long ago on brave reporters in Bogotá and Medellín, but a New York crime expert could recall only one time when a journalist was murdered on the job here, and that was when a Mafia family "whacked" a reporter for attacking Mussolini—in 1943.

Naturally, the headlines seized on the drug martyrdom of de Dios; yet when *Vanity Fair* assigned Leslie and Andrew Cockburn to the mystery, they found all too many shadowy figures besides the cartel bosses who would have been glad to see the crusader dead—militant anti-Castro Cubans, right-wing Puerto Ricans, small-time Dominican traffickers, and wealthy New York–based Colombians, to name a few. They also found that there was more complexity to the life and ambitions of a man who became so obsessed with drugs and crime that he considered himself not so much a reporter as a player—"the untouchable," as some friends dubbed him, who alone could root out the demons. Since the loss of his editor's chair at *El Diario–La Prensa,* New York's oldest and largest Spanish-language daily, Manuel de Dios had become an increasingly reckless maverick.

The Cockburns followed the trail into the subculture of Little Colombia in Queens, New York, where few "gringos" ever venture but "everyone has something to say about de Dios"; to Puerto Rico, where de Dios had recently testified about a murderous scandal; and to Colombia itself, where hit men with names like El Duende (the ghost) and El Gato (the cat) brazenly walk the streets. They talked with de Dios's forgotten wife, Maria, and with his girlfriend, Vicky Sánchez; with the Alarcon brothers, who run flashy Queens nightclubs (where the flush patrons are frisked at the door); and with a cartel executive in the high-tech headquarters in Cali, who mapped out the cartel's hostage programs and transportation routes in the U.S. and who calculates that for every five-hundred-kilo run, two people are killed.

The Cockburns were ideally suited for their mission. As correspondents for the acclaimed PBS series *Frontline,* they had reported extensively from Miami and from Central and South America, including an hour-long documentary on the elite of the Cali cartel, and they have also written on these subjects in two books. Their report (page 98) is a compelling narrative and a vivid insight into a world parallel yet alien to Anglo America. As the Cockburns document, de Dios had become a victim of the tensions of that world long before his death.

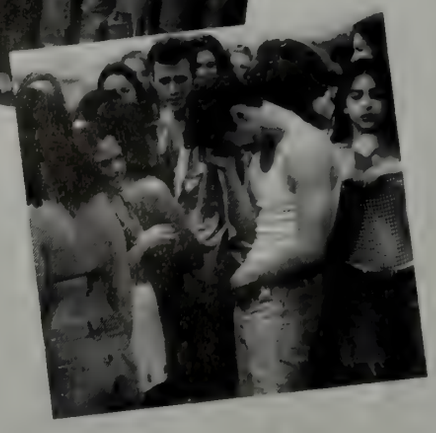
Tina Brown

Editor in chief

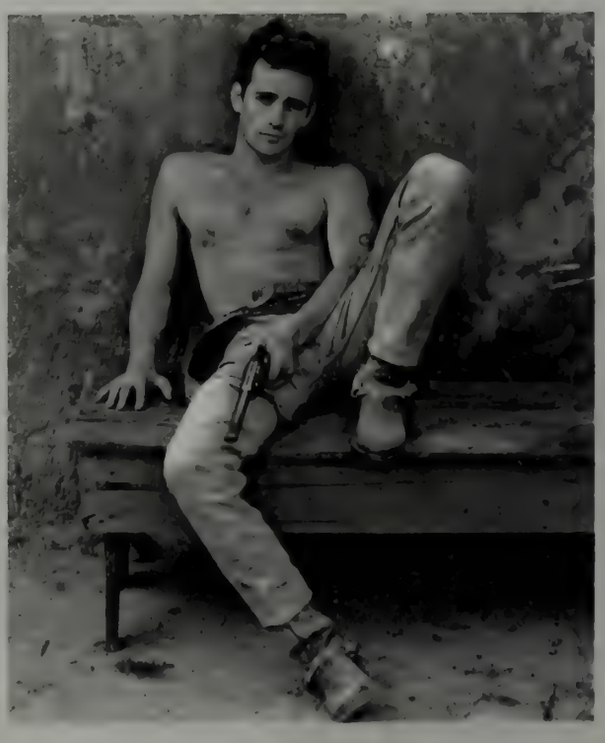
Cover

Admirable Perry





Cool Hand Luke Perry and *Beverly Hills, 90210* co-star Jason Priestley, *above* and *right,* get more than a lukewarm reception from female fans near the boardwalk at Santa Monica Beach.



On the cover: Luke Perry, photographed exclusively for *V.F.* by Annie Leibovitz. Styled by Natalie Zimmerman.


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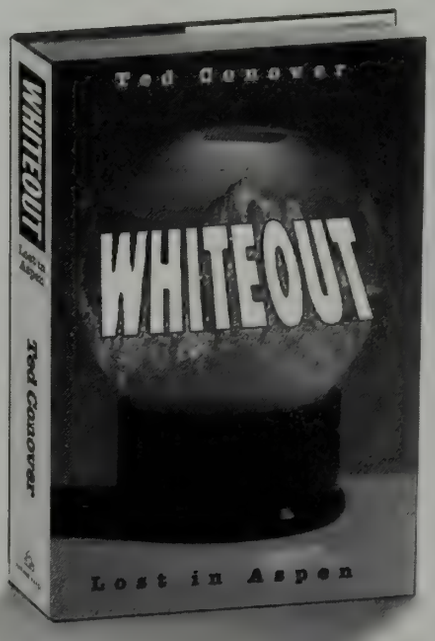
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— Tracy Kidder



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Contributors

Steven Bach's *Marlene Dietrich: Life and Legend* will be out this year from William Morrow in the U.S., and from HarperCollins in the U.K. His best-selling book, *Final Cut,* is an account of the filming of *Heaven's Gate.*

Peter J. Boyer is writing a book for Random House.

Leslie and Andrew Cockburn have been married for fifteen years. Separately and together, they have covered the related worlds of war, intelligence, and the drug business both in print and on television. Last year they collaborated on *Dangerous Liaison: The Inside Story of the U.S.-Israeli Covert Relationship* (HarperCollins) and *The War We Left Behind,* about the aftermath of the Gulf War, for PBS. In an interview for their 1990 documentary *Inside the Cartel,* a professional murderer in Medellín told Andrew that, pricewise, "a journalist like you is worth a lot," useful background for researching this month's piece on journalist Manuel de Dios Unanue's assassination.

Bob Colacello is currently covering the European social and cultural scene for *V.F.* Of this month's piece, he says, "Madame Sukarno is a fascinating character, because her story encompasses so many worlds—politics, society, business, Paris, Tokyo, Indonesia, and now, for better or for worse, Aspen."

Lynn Hirschberg covers Hollywood, the media, and music for *V.F.*

Jesse Kornbluth's *Highly Confident: The Punishment and Crime of Michael Milken* will be out this month from William Morrow. "Late in my research, people on every side of this case began to send me confidential memos, transcripts, and investigative reports," he says of the book, which is excerpted in this issue. "By the time I started writing, the leaks had become torrents, and I had 10,000 pages of previously unseen material."

Maureen Orth visited Ireland twice for this month's profile of President Mary Robinson. "It was striking," she says, "to see the influence and respect this feminist commands and to realize that no one like her yet exists in America."

John Seabrook, who also writes for *The New Yorker,* is working on a book about patents.

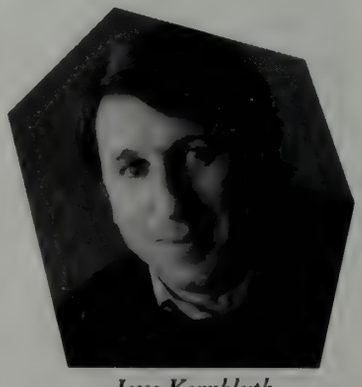
Kevin Sessums' play, *Blue Suede Gospel,* will open at the Arts Theatre in London's West End in the fall.

Mark Stevens frequently covers art for *V.F.* He is at work on a biography of Willem de Kooning.

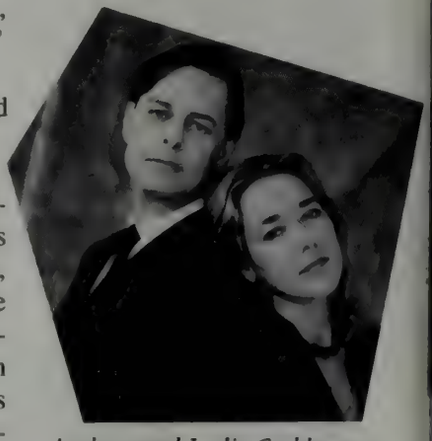
James Wolcott has written for *Harper's, The New Republic,* and the London *Observer.*



Steven Bach on the legend of Marlene Dietrich, page 84.



Jesse Kornbluth on Michael Milken's jailhouse blues, page 32.



Andrew and Leslie Cockburn on the killing of journalist Manuel de Dios Unanue, page 98.



John Seabrook on Ed Bass and the Biosphere 2 project, page 50.



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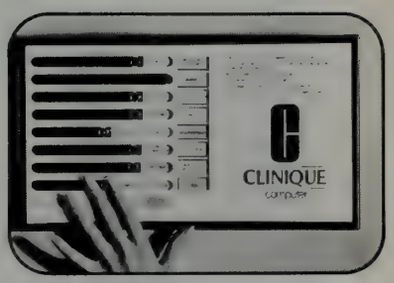
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couldn't help wondering what it would be like if you... had been...a *boy*.

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wrong in the first place.

And one day when you're out in the world running, feet flying dogs barking smiles grinning, you'll hear those immortal words calling, calling inside your head *Oh you run like a girl*

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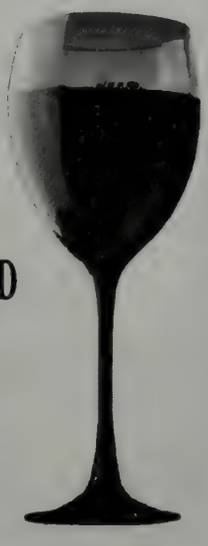
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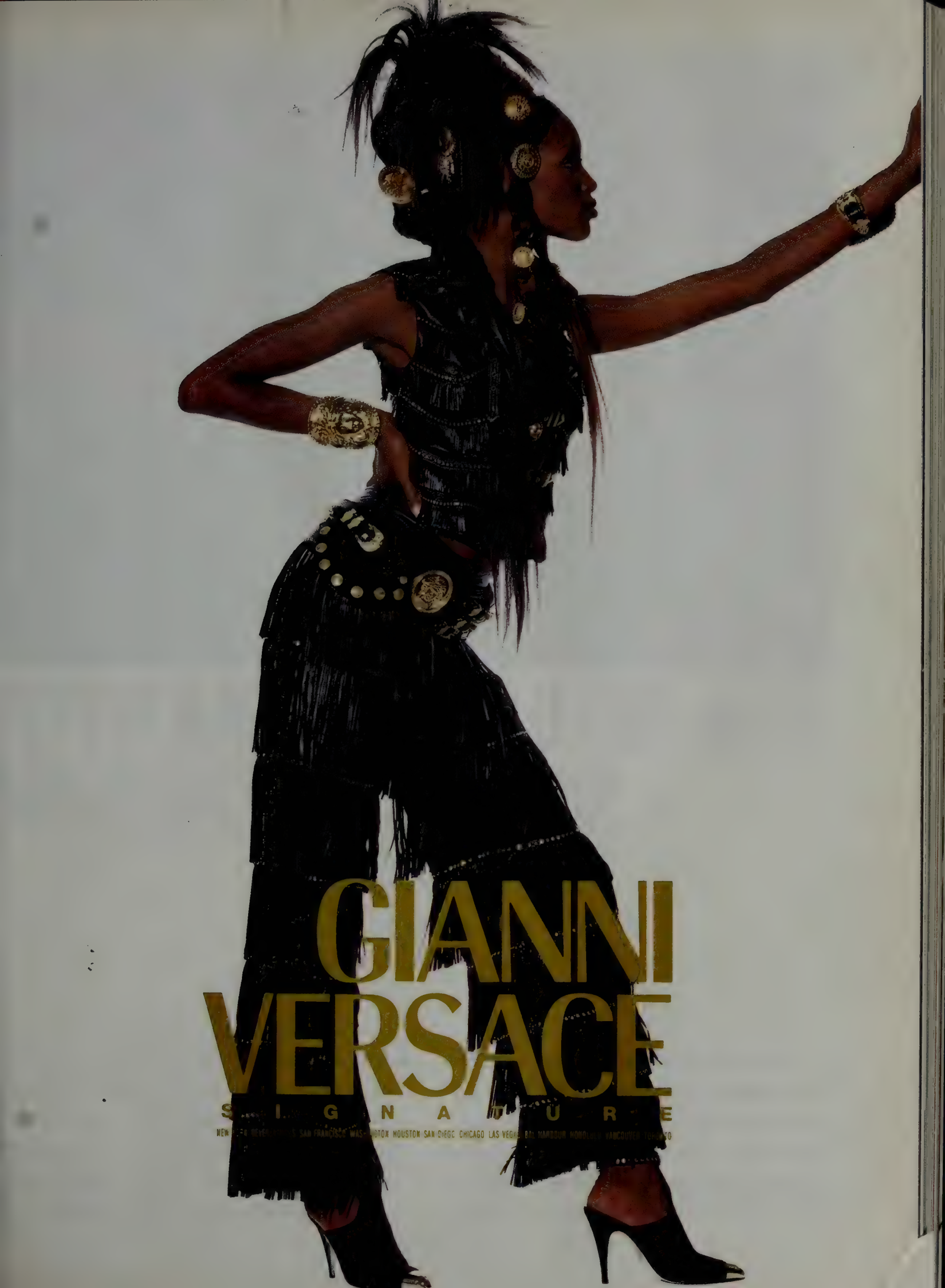
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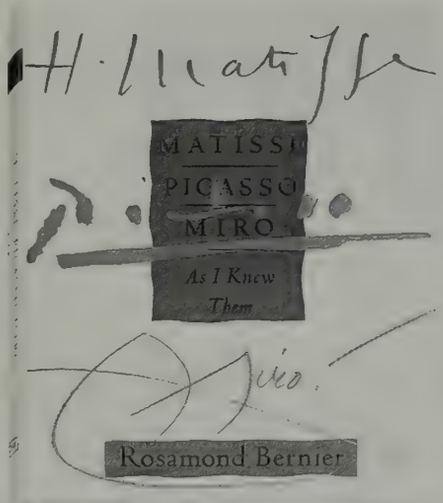

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Letters

READERS BITE BACK



Gold Rush

Thank you for "Bull Rush," by Peter J. Boyer [May]. Rush Limbaugh is our modern version of Jonathan Swift. No wonder his targets squirm; when you are skewered, it hurts.

L. R. STOEVEN III
Dixon, California

Rush Limbaugh is conservatism's not-so-secret weapon. A conservative with humor used to be an oxymoron. No more. Limbaugh is well-read and intelligent, but he's also funny. Many modern-day liberals, on the other hand, are afflicted with traits that once haunted conservatives. They are angry, hard-edged, and humorless. That's a death sentence in politics. Those of us on the right can now say to liberals, with some justification, "Lighten up."

PETER WEHNER
Alexandria, Virginia

Limbaugh's bucket-mouthed kind of knee-jerk conservatism is to humor what the Central Park muggers were to physical fitness. The kind of diatribe he drums merrily into his 11.6 million listeners tells us as much about them as it does about him. Realizing that this happens fifteen hours a week, every week, one can only conclude that the man is dangerous. And he is cunning. I am reminded of Henry Adams's warning of nearly a century ago about "the effect of unlimited power on limited minds."

GLEN EVANS
Stamford, Connecticut

Thank you for running the Limbaugh story. Rush is my hero!

AL PFISTER
Bremen, Indiana

In spite of his supposedly entertaining protests, Limbaugh is a racist, sexist hatemonger.

J. B. AITKEN
Durango, Colorado

Consider this a pre-emptive strike against the lockstepping, "politically correct" hordes who will want to rain on my "disenfranchised" parade. Regarding my comment in Peter J. Boyer's piece: For the record, I have nothing but empathy for poor people; until eight years ago, I *was* "poor" people. What I dislike are people on the left *or* right who claim anyone with problems is a *victim* of someone who *doesn't* have *those* problems. Limbaugh serves a purpose. He can also be a reprehensible boor when it comes to women, abortion, sex, and drugs. I may laugh at what he says, but that doesn't mean I agree with it.

DON SIMPSON
Burbank, California

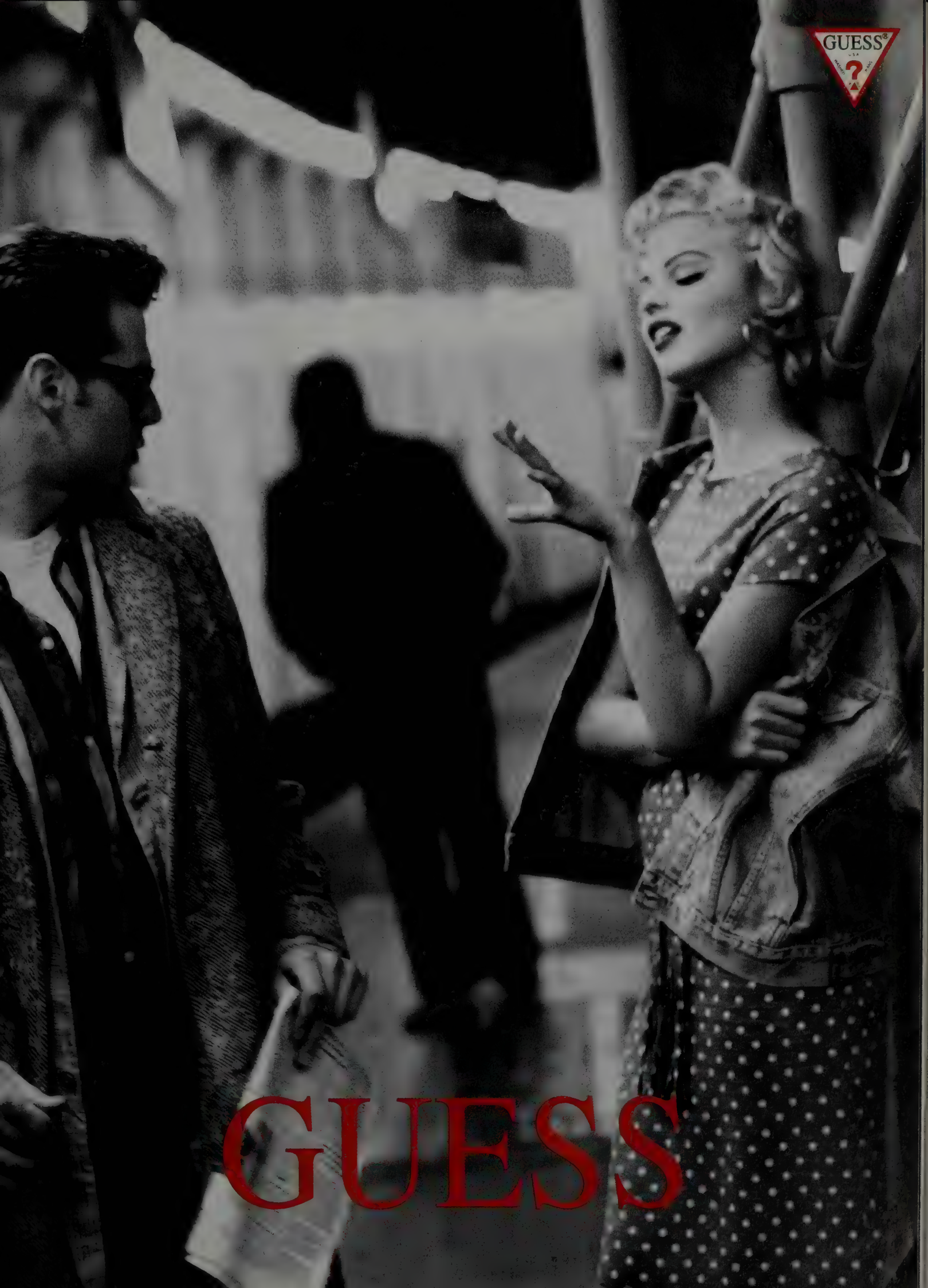
With ideological standard-bearers like Limbaugh, how can conservatives seriously ask why so many American women, me included, are leaving their ranks in droves? If Limbaugh is representative of repellent New Right thinking, Republican pollsters can expect a mass female exodus in November.

MELISSA BALDRIDGE
Houston, Texas

While Rush ridicules the foibles of feminists, gays, animal-rights activists, environmentalists, and the homeless, one group escapes his obloquy: he never makes fun of fat people. Why doesn't this 320-pound bully pick on somebody his own size?

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Letters

As a woman who listens faithfully to Rush Limbaugh, I cannot possibly, according to Susan Faludi, have my head screwed on straight. As a twenty-three-year-old Indiana University political-science graduate, I beg to differ. I am happy to be a woman, yet I refuse to pledge allegiance to a group based solely upon chromosomal composition.

LISA FAYE MILLER
Bloomington, Indiana

Gloria Allred compares Rush Limbaugh to Hitler, but she does not detail her reasons. Eleven million listeners on almost five hundred radio stations do not waste their time on someone yearning for the glory days of the Third Reich.

CHRISTOPHER CHICHESTER
Albany, New York

Having heard Rush Limbaugh moan about the job done on him by *Vanity Fair*, I was agreeably surprised to find the Boyer piece reasonably fair and free of the usual blend of rage, fear, and condescension with which this guy is regularly described. Limbaugh is unique, mostly because he's yelling things that millions of people obviously believe, on a medium so drenched in political liberalism that it generally views conservative opinions as aberrant, lunatic-fringe, redneck, or Fascist. *And never funny*. If the cultural triumph of political liberalism were less complete, Limbaugh would not stand out so much.

SAUL DAVID
Sherman Oaks, California

The day after I saw my favorite radio-talk-show host get bashed by Phil Donahue and his left-wing audience, I received my May issue of *Vanity Fair*. Yes, I am a woman, and, no, I do not feel abused when I listen to Rush Limbaugh. I do not have the "all men are ogres" attitude, and therefore can listen to Rush's antics objectively. Thank you for a fair, insightful article about poor, misunderstood Rush.

JENNIFER DRISCOLL
Greensboro, North Carolina

Capitol Hillary

Regarding "What Hillary Wants," by Gail Sheehy [May]: The night Hillary Clinton took that mike to introduce her husband was the night I started listening to Bill Clinton. If a vote for Bill Clinton is a vote for Hillary, let's go for it!

BUDDY OCHOA
Los Angeles, California

Yes, I wish that Mrs. Clinton were running for president instead of her husband, but she is not. I don't know precisely what her role in the campaign should be; I am quite sure that it ought not to include letting slip to a reporter innuendos about George Bush's alleged marital infidelities. This sort of dirty job is normally performed by a minor campaign functionary who can then be perfunctorily fired. I have always claimed that I would vote for the Devil against George Bush. Now I find myself trapped along with the Democratic Party in its Faustian nightmare. Frankly, although I may vote for them, the Clintons seem more and more like a couple from hell.

MELINDA CHATAIN
Amagansett, New York

The woman a man chooses to be his wife reveals much about his values and judgment, and Hillary Clinton is one major reason Slick Willie will never live in the White House.

LINDA WARREN
Arlington, Virginia

If the Shoe Fits

Imelda Marcos's eagerness to point out to Luisita Lopez Torregrosa in "The Thrilla in Manila" [May] that her husband, Ferdinand Marcos, was a rich man well before he became president in 1965 doesn't jibe with my experiences with the former Philippine First Family. Having developed and partially executed the campaign that won the presidency for him, I ever so politely asked to be paid the compensation and out-of-pocket expenses that we had previously agreed upon. Said Imelda, "We are poor people. We have no money left. But don't worry. When Ferdie is elected president, you'll dance in Malacañang." I never did get paid, and I never did dance in the presidential palace they long called home, but had I, it would have been a little like dances with wolves.

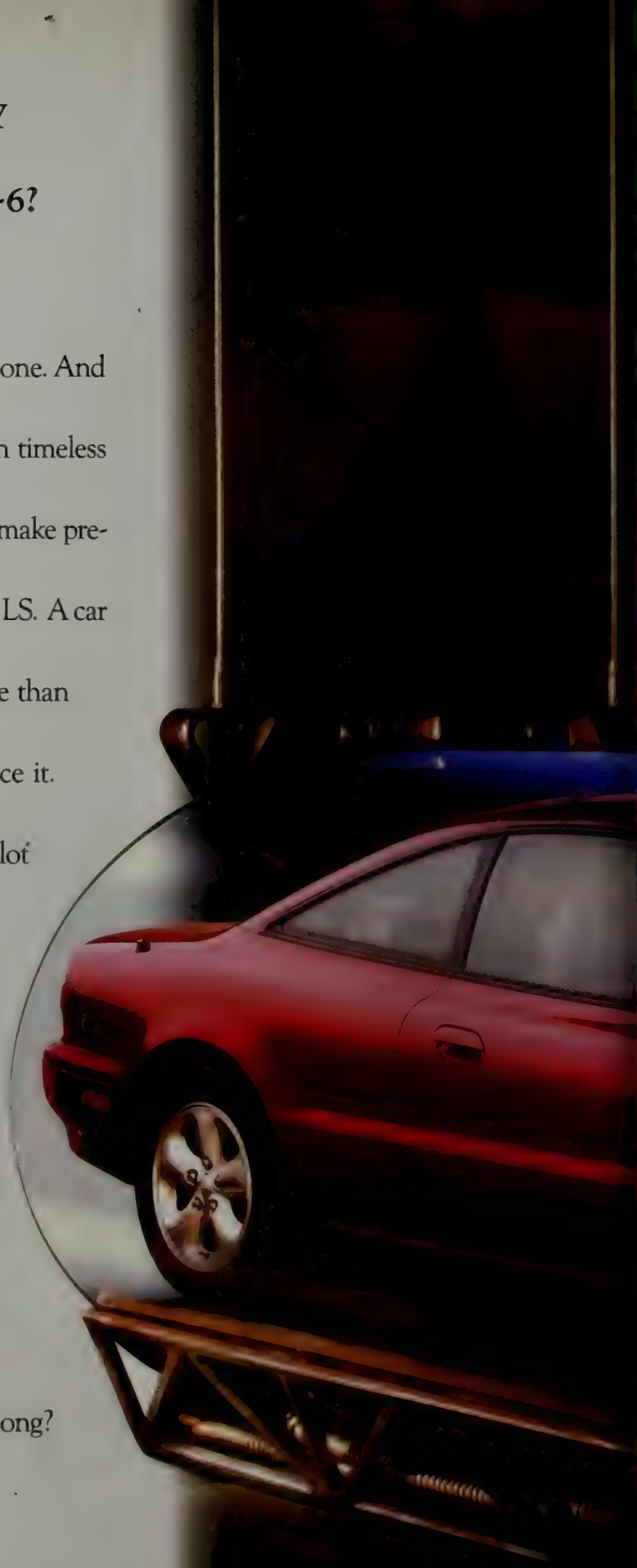
LEONARD SAFFIR
Boca Raton, Florida

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Ivan Boesky, *below,* after pleading guilty to violating federal securities laws in 1987. Michael Milken, *right,* later said his attitude toward Boesky was "Okay, if you want to make money, I'll find you money."

SPILLED MILKEN

He's had more than a year in jail to wrestle with his demons, but as this excerpt from a new book reports, the fallen junk-bond king is still in denial

BY JESSE KORNBLUTH

Of all the transactions he was involved in, Ivan Boesky's greatest deal was his plea bargain. The government let him off with one felony count, three fewer than his henchman Dennis Levine. His $100 million fine, though unprecedented, was as much as $200 million less than his crimes may have warranted. He was allowed to sell off his stock positions before his deal with the government was announced. He won the right to choose the judge who would sentence him. And when he went off to a California prison in late March of 1988, he was sent to the facility that was his first choice.

Once there, Boesky continued to get everything his way. No sooner had he been assigned to Lompoc—the minimum-security prison near Santa Barbara that was, until recently, famed for good living and comfy accommodations—than he began to abuse its rules. Considering that celebrity inmates are supervised more by Washington than by individual jails, administrators at the highest level of the Bureau of Prisons may have known what Boesky was up to. That, anyway, is the conclusion of some of the inmates who knew Boesky best.

"Ivan was actively courted by the Feds," says a prisoner who lived in Boesky's dorm. "He was able to go into town when he wanted, and he was allowed to use the administrators' phones."

Access to unmonitored phones and the freedom to come and go as he pleased were only the beginning of the special treatment for the government's star witness against Michael Milken. Boesky's work assignment to the prison dairy didn't displease him for long; he was soon stationed in the visitors' room, where he had little to do. He was rarely seen in the mess hall, preferring to eat steaks and fresh fruit—two items not on the general menu—in the relative privacy of the visitors' room. On several occasions, says a former inmate, a blonde in her early thirties collected Boesky in a blue Honda.

Pleasanton is no Lompoc. That's clear as soon as you drive through the gates—beyond the wood-frame offices and undeveloped fields of Camp Parks are row after row of what were once two-story barracks. Now they're looming hulks, blasted by the Northern California weather, their windows shattered long ago.

The motif of ruin ends on Eighth Street, where there is a real prison. Its strong walls catch the eye; the antiseptic building just across the street escapes notice. But here, in a modern version of those abandoned barracks, is where Michael Milken came to reside in March of 1991.

This isn't the prison that Milken requested. Because there is sickness in his family, he asked for a facility in Nevada that was close to a hospital. The judge who sentenced him endorsed that request. The Bureau of Prisons, however, decided he should be assigned to Pleasanton, an amenity-free work camp just far enough from a hospital to make for an anxious drive to Oakland if a medical emergency occurs during a family visit.

There are no locks, no armed guards

From the forthcoming book *Highly Confident: The Punishment and Crime of Michael Milken,* by Jesse Kornbluth; © 1992 by Jesse Kornbluth; printed by permission of William Morrow & Co., Inc.



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here; the facility has the feel of a dorm at a poorly endowed college. This informality goes only so far. No one can walk out, or avoid work, or use an administrator's phone with impunity; although friends and relatives on an approved list may see inmates a few days each week, children aren't allowed to bring sporting gear or games with them. Journalists who wish to interview Milken must send a formal request long in advance; in March of 1991 prison officials, aware of Milken's sense of privacy, were rejecting media inquiries as a matter of course. I had to write them a second letter to make it clear that he actually wished to meet with me.

A month and a half after Milken checked in, I sat in the visitors' area while a guard went into the inmates' quarters to bring him out. Somewhere back there was a cafeteria, a television room, and a library. And there were bedrooms for the eighty men who live here. Small bedrooms—Milken shares his with three other men.

Milken appeared. He wore a navy turtleneck, jeans, and sneakers. And a baseball cap. He was tanned from working outside—as well as cleaning bathrooms and mopping floors, he was tidying up the trash area and scouring rust off signs—and thinner than before. As he took a seat across from me, the guard presented him with a standard permission sheet. While he scanned the form, he leaned back and, very casually, removed his cap. A thoughtful, obviously premeditated gesture; my adjustment occurred while he was otherwise engaged. But little adjustment was necessary. As with many men who wear toupees, Milken looked better without one.

Milken's decision to remove the baseball cap struck me as his way of announcing that he had nothing to hide. After years of having lawyers oversee his conversations, he was willing to confront all the issues. In this, his first jailhouse interview, no topic was forbidden.

Men who have only recently arrived in prison are often more obsessed with the wrongs they feel have been done to them than with what they've done wrong. In April of 1991, Milken shared that affliction. And so his conversations gravitated toward a one-line rationalization: his offenses aside, his biggest blunders were his naïveté and his insistence on maintaining a code of honor in a dishonorable world. Because he never spoke up and never fought back, he said, he was now paying the price.

"I believed in giving anonymously, praising others, and only speaking well of others," Milken told me. "You can't live in this country today with those beliefs. Not to confront falsehoods for twenty years—that was a mistake. The truth keeps leaking out, but in the short run, it doesn't shine through. Operating behind the scenes, always giving the credit to others, and never explaining why you did what you did—another mistake. Giving help anonymously—also an error. When people find out, your philanthropy becomes tainted, you did it 'for some other purpose,' and because you have no public history, you have no standing. All those years, I thought the marketplace or the customer was the final judge. I was wrong. In the short run, it's the media. And in the media, nothing means anything unless it's negative."

Milken was tanned from working outside—as well as cleaning bathrooms and mopping floors, he was tidying up the trash area—and thinner than before.

He took the plea, he said, because he couldn't take any more of the racketeering indictment hanging over his entire family and the incessant battering coming his way from the government, the press, his own firm, and his competitors. In his mind, the plea should have put an end to the assault. Just the opposite occurred: "Certain people moved further from reality. The only solution is to address their credibility."

What journalists, former colleagues, and the witnesses against him most consistently get wrong, Milken believes, is his role in the insider-trading scandals of the 1980s. During the heyday of leveraged buyouts and mergers and takeovers, trading on nonpublic information was common—in 1983 and 1984, according to *Business Week*, 72 percent of the companies involved in those transactions saw their stock price rise in the month before an announcement of a deal. If Milken could make only one point, it would be that he was never involved in *any* of that.

"Boesky wasn't a factor in my business," he says. "If Drexel had never done a trade or a financing for Boesky, it wouldn't have had a noticeable impact on the High-Yield Bond Department or its earnings. So what reason did I have to share information with Boesky? None. It never happened.

"Ivan Boesky made tens of millions of dollars buying stocks with inside information he got from Marty Siegel and Dennis Levine. And yet he loses $6 to $8 million on Occidental Petroleum and makes no money on MGM or Pacific Lumber—what kind of 'arrangement' with Mike Milken is this?

"But it's even simpler than that: if Boesky had Mike Milken, why did he need Dennis Levine? Why were [Boyd] Jefferies and others his principal brokers? Here's how much control I had over Ivan Boesky: *I couldn't get him to buy my product, the bonds I believed in and encouraged everybody to buy—and if I controlled him, don't you think I could have succeeded in that?*"

When two disgraced financiers tell diametrically opposed stories about what they did together, it's useful to turn away from their accusations and look at the facts. In an insider-trading case, though, the facts are often inconclusive. Trading records and phone bills—the physical evidence—may prove that securities were purchased and that men who had information spoke to one another. But how can anyone prove they shared this information?

In this case, we do know that at 5:30 on the morning of October 1, 1986, the phone rang in the High-Yield Bond Department at the Beverly Hills office of Drexel Burnham Lambert. Michael Milken's assistant answered it. The caller, Milken was told, was Ivan Boesky.

"Good afternoon," Milken began, his standard pre-dawn greeting.

"Afternoon, Michael. How many hours you been up this morning?"

"Two and a quarter."

"Two and a quarter—it's time for lunch, Michael. What's going on with you?"

"Oh, just working very hard."

"That-a-boy."

Boesky quickly arrived at his reason

look forward

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OPTICAL

for calling. "You remember some time ago we talked about the idea that it might not be bad to get together?"

"Yeah."

"And we never got together."

Milken asked his assistant for his schedule—he wanted to know when he'd next be in New York.

"Do you understand what I'm talking about?" Boesky asked, trying to nail down the topics of special interest without actually naming them.

If Milken thought Boesky meant interest rates, he was forgetting something far more important. In 1985, aides of both Milken and Boesky began to keep a scorecard of Boesky's trading activity with Drexel. Some of this was standard Wall Street practice—a way for a broker to remind a client that his ideas were profitable, a way for a client to see just how well his broker was doing for him. But much of it was something else: a running tab on stock Boesky bought at Milken's request and stock Milken bought for Boesky that they were holding—"parking"—for each other.

In March 1986, when Drexel was raising $660 million for Boesky's arbitrage partnership, Boesky decided that Drexel was charging far too much for its services—and he informed the investment bankers that he was reducing Drexel's fee by $5 million. Drexel New York screamed at Milken to get it back. And Milken decided the moment was ripe to make Boesky pay for a ton of uncompensated investment-banking work Drexel had done for him over the years.

Ivan Boesky was a strange creature. To hold on to his money as long as possible, he liked to give his employees their salary checks after the banks closed. He fought over standard brokerage commissions. He balked at paying investment-banking fees. But he was generally good about compensating his partners in crime for the illegal services they performed for him. So what Milken described as a charge for legitimate services was, for Boesky, a settling of the parking account, pure and simple.

There was much argument over the amount—at one point, Boesky was convinced that Drexel owed him money—but on the day the old Boesky partnership was being dissolved and the new fund was being born, Boesky agreed to pay Drexel $5.3 million. Drexel's invoice couldn't have been shorter. "For consulting services as agreed upon on March 21, 1986," it read.

Prosecutors could have a field day with that. If Drexel had performed legitimate investment-banking services, why this separate bill? Why hadn't Drexel simply added this fee to the $24 million it was already charging Boesky? What was *really* going on here?

Along with some securities lawyers, Milken would say, "Nothing much." For him, parking was a gray area, industry practice, a minor infraction settled by the Securities and Exchange Commission without an onerous criminal prosecution by the U.S. attorney. In another time, Boesky would have said the same thing. But now they were in what Milken called a "new environment." And the government would almost certainly view accommodations that once seemed harmless as serious violations of the securities laws.

And yet, for all the danger that Boesky represented, Milken listened just closely enough to him to say that, yes, he knew what was on his mind, and as for New York, he'd be there next on October 22. Then Milken had a better idea. Boesky's wife, Seema, and her sister, Muriel Slatkin, owned the Beverly Hills Hotel. Although Boesky held just 4 percent of the stock, he made many of the economic decisions about the hotel, and, as he had been saying for a while, this looked like the top of the real-estate boom, an ideal time to take a profit—perhaps from the acquisition-minded Kirk Kerkorian.

"If you're thinking of selling the hotel, maybe if you come out here, you and Kerkorian and I could spend a half-hour together," Milken said.

"All those years, I thought the marketplace or the customer was the final judge. I was wrong. In the short run, it's the media."

"Actually, I was thinking of coming out and spending a few hours in L.A. next Thursday."

"You're on." Milken set an October 9 date at Boesky's suite. "We'll meet with Kerkorian. And if he has a feel for it, maybe we can get him to make a higher bid."

"The next question is, ah, having kind of like a *private* meeting, no?" Boesky asked, determined to corner Milken.

Milken didn't balk. He said he wanted to take a look at Boesky's debt; he wasn't sure Boesky had the right capital structure.

"Ah, and if you could, ah, spend a little time recalling what we had talked about."

"I'll review all the points, don't worry."

"Good."

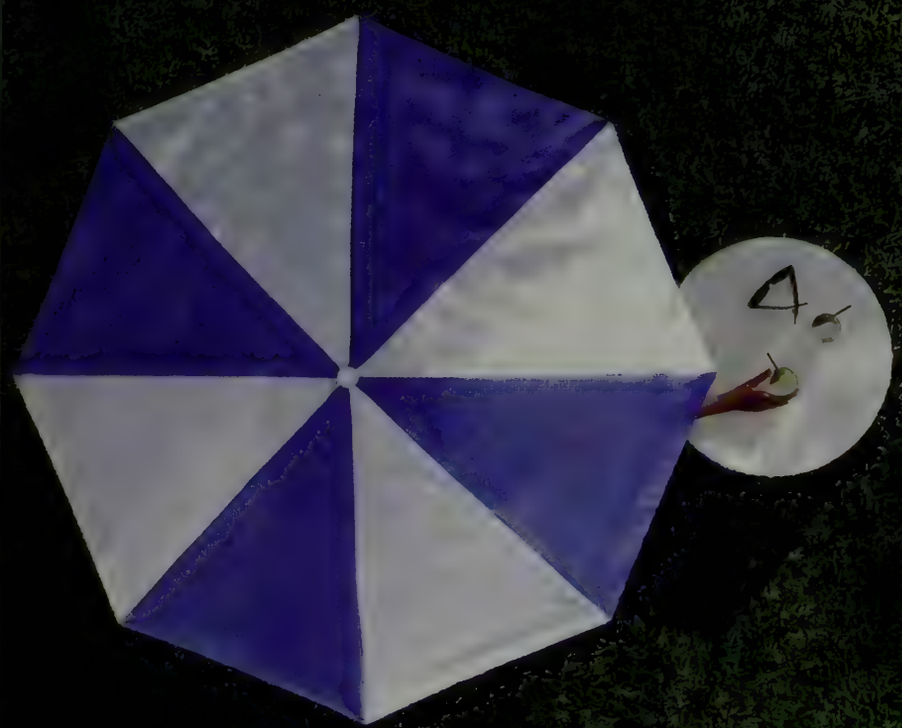
"Great. I'm going to jump."

"Thank you," Boesky said as he hung up, and Tom Doonan, a criminal investigator in the employ of Rudolph Giuliani, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, disconnected the recorder that had taped this call.

Boesky hadn't called Milken much since Drexel had helped him set up the biggest arbitrage fund in the history of American finance. His comparative silence might have been an indication that he no longer needed Milken. Or he might have wanted to teach Milken a lesson: now he was truly important and powerful, and to prove it he wouldn't be doing much with Drexel until Milken realized Boesky was as important as Henry Kravis, Ronald Perelman, T. Boone Pickens, and Carl Icahn.

In fact, there was a darker meaning to Boesky's silence. Two months earlier, in August of 1986, Boesky had informed the employees of the Beverly Hills Hotel that he was being investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission. But even before that announcement and the press reports that followed it, rumors were flying about Dennis Levine, a Drexel managing director who'd been nabbed for insider trading in May. Levine was said to have told the government that he and Boesky routinely broke insider-trading laws. To Milken, Boesky not only denied any wrongdoing, he denied even knowing Levine. "Can you believe that guy?" he told Milken a week after Levine had pleaded guilty. "In a different world, he wouldn't be alive now."

Two months later, shortly after he got his Levine-inspired subpoenas, Boesky asked his lawyer what they meant. Harvey Pitt, who was once general counsel for the Securities and Exchange Commission, knew how to read those documents—not as demands for information, but as accusations of criminal behavior. "Ivan, the government does many



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things," he said, "but it's not likely they made this up out of whole cloth."

So Boesky pleaded. Just like that. One afternoon in August, some assistant U.S. attorneys were sitting around in New York deciding there was no way they'd ever nail Boesky, and a minute later Harvey Pitt was on the phone, suggesting he'd like to come in and talk. When he hung up, the astounded prosecutors burst out laughing. By Labor Day, though, they had their game faces on again, and in exchange for the arbitrageur's willingness to help them bring down as many as four Wall Street figures—with Milken at the top of the list—they made a deal with him.

There was only one catch. In mid-November, Boesky had to file a routine, public report with the S.E.C., and in it he had to disclose any legal judgments or investigations. Every financial writer in America was working the Boesky story; as a practical matter, whatever help he could give the government had to end on November 14, when the news of his plea would be announced. So there was a great deal riding on the October 9 meeting at the Beverly Hills Hotel—not just for Boesky, but for U.S. attorney Rudolph Giuliani, the S.E.C., and, of course, Michael Milken, who didn't even realize he was the target.

At the Beverly Hills Hotel, Boesky, a microphone taped under his shirt, called room service. He called his office. And then the phone rang. It was Milken, in the lobby. Terrific. Come on up.

The door opened. There they were, face-to-face for perhaps only the tenth time in their five-year relationship. Two of the most intriguing figures in finance, staring each other down in this Beverly Hills version of the O.K. Corral.

Only one looked the part, and that was the forty-nine-year-old Boesky, in his bespoke three-piece suit with the gold watch and chain he had copied from Winston Churchill. The collar of his white shirt was too long, accentuating his scrawny body and narrow face—Ichabod Crane goes to Wall Street. It was the eyes that made him seem authentic: piercing, unforgiving, the eyes of a man who has only to look at his prey to calculate its weaknesses. Arbitrageur's eyes, seeking profit in the spread between appearance and reality.

Milken, in contrast, looked like an economics professor who would never be a panelist on a Sunday-morning talk show. Everything about him screamed off-the-rack. There was a second button on the cuff of his blue oxford shirt, a sure sign that it had been bought at a department store. The blazer and gray flannels were standard-issue, the loafers were regulation Bally, somebody had given him the Hermès tie. At forty, he looked small and boyish, even though he stood almost six feet tall and wore a fairly obvious toupee. All he needed was a calculator clipped to his belt and a plastic nerdpack to hold his pens and the picture of the unworldly genius would have been complete.

"Can you believe that guy?" Boesky told Milken a week after Dennis Levine had pleaded guilty. "In a different world, he wouldn't be alive now."

"Michael."

"How are you, Ivan?"

"Happy to see you."

"Michael, want some coffee?"

Boesky had to be joking. Everyone knew Mike Milken was the ultimate Boy Scout—he drank nothing that contained caffeine, hard liquor never touched his lips, he'd had maybe one beer in his life, it was unclear if he'd even been in the same room as a joint. All he liked was water or fruit juice, and if you were going to serve him water, it had better not be fizzy.

"A little tea?" Boesky asked.

"A little water."

As soon as they were settled, Milken launched into a discussion of the nominal business at hand—the sale of the hotel. In minutes, that was out of the way. Who'd suggest a conversational stroll down memory lane? Not Milken. So all the pressure was on Boesky.

"First of all, we have had a subpoena," Boesky began. "Our lawyers were able to get that withdrawn. I might ask you, have you got any inquiry?"

Milken shook his head.

"Nothing? That's good. O.K. The question is, we go back to a long time ago. And we talked about a little item of business that we had. We've got to figure out what that is."

"It's done," Milken said.

"Tell me what it is," Boesky said, boring in, "because I'd like to know."

"The issue was how do we get to the negotiation of all the fees on the deal and the lawyer fees," Milken replied. "They have the data in New York."

"What data?"

This wasn't the way to pin Milken down. A request for specifics was, for him, nothing less than an invitation to drown his questioner in minutiae; here, with Boesky, he leapt to the task. Then Boesky began a new line of questioning, with yes-or-no answers that forced Milken into a few very modest admissions. At last, sensing Boesky had run dry, Milken laid out his version of events, leading him through all the research Drexel had done for transactions that he had never completed. "If you remember," Milken said, "you told me, 'If I don't do some business, I'll pay you.' "

"Right."

"And when you were disbanding the partnership, you couldn't carry the thing forward, so you paid us."

"All right."

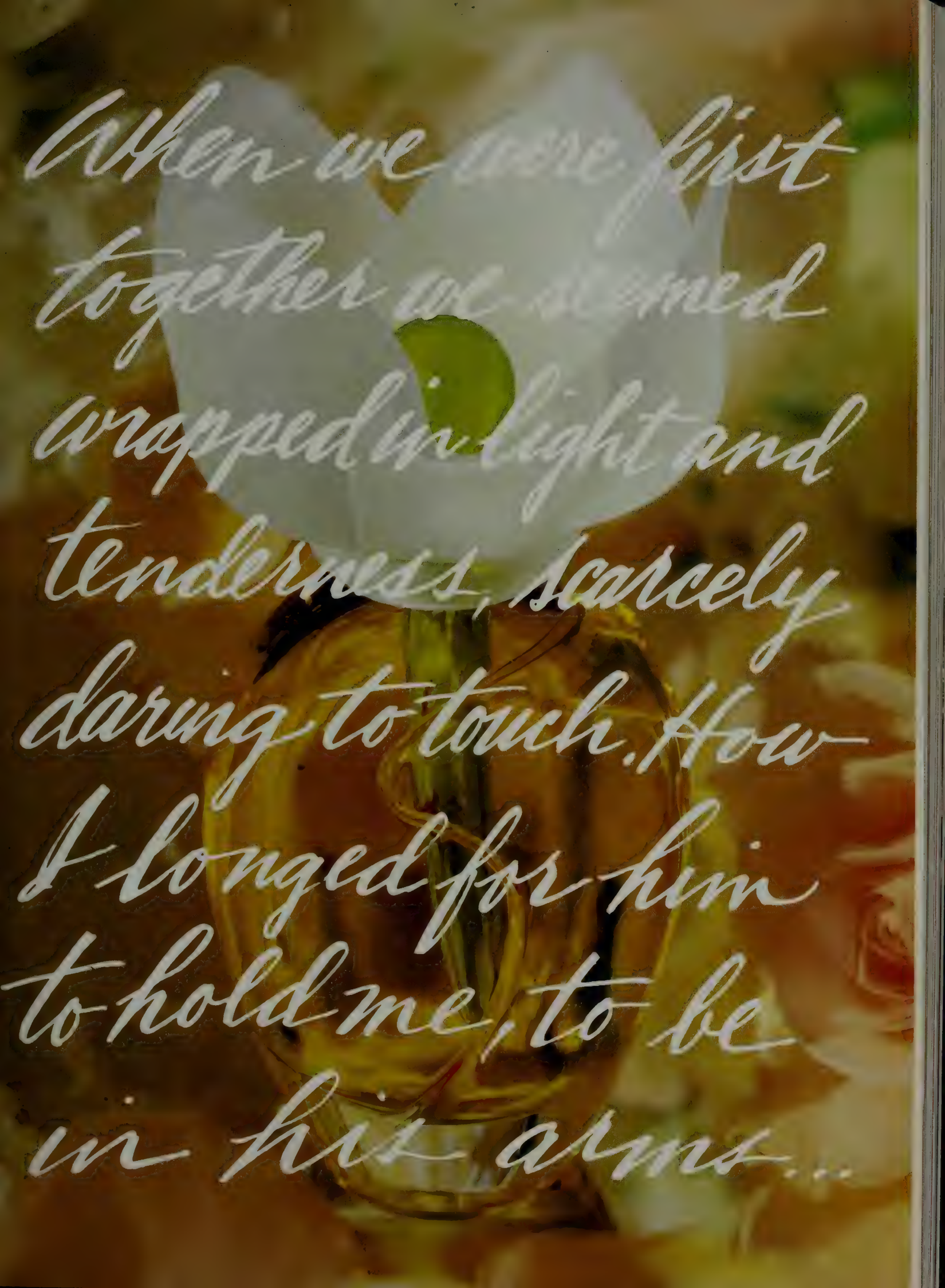
"Wasn't that our understanding?"

"That was our understanding," Boesky agreed, an admission that would be hard for him to explain if this tape ever found its way into a courtroom.

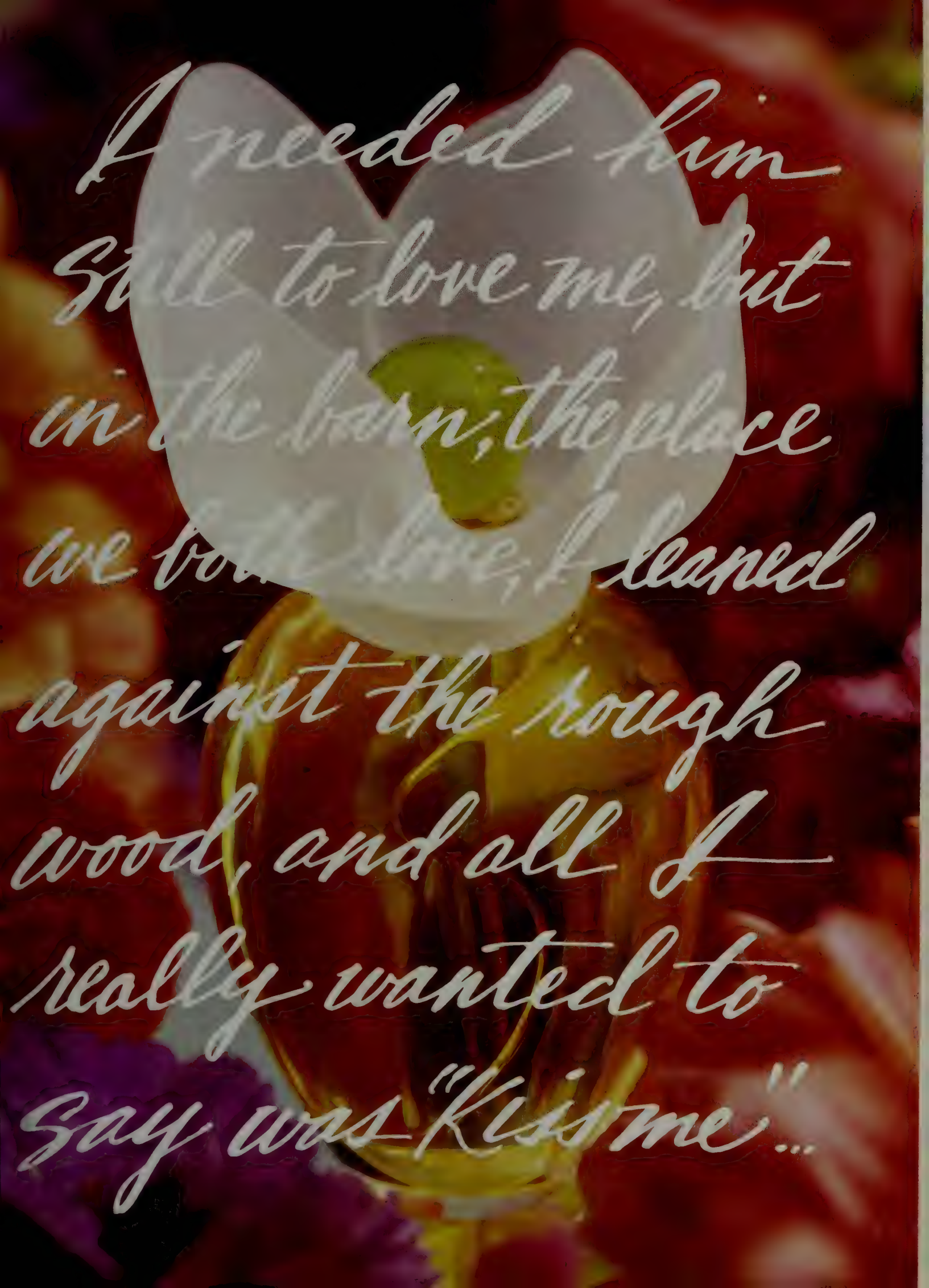
Why didn't Boesky push Milken harder, either here or in a subsequent taped conversation? Why did he needlessly pussyfoot around his own misconduct? Had he just wimped out? Or had he promised the government more than he could deliver and didn't want the prosecutors to know he'd cheated them?

On Milken's side, a different question comes to mind. If, as he insists, he had no vast criminal partnership with Ivan Boesky, why did he devote so much time and attention to him? Milken couldn't have been seduced by Boesky's warmth and charm. Employees have said he was impossible—"a raving maniac"—when he was doing well. His wife describes him as an "iceman." Her sister long ago announced that he was "an arrogant and avaricious piece of sewage, the worst kind of bully." In 1984, then congressman Tim Wirth had a casual meeting with Boesky; his revulsion was physical. Wirth's colleague recalls that "we walked out of the conference room, looked at one another—and went 'Ouf.' "

It's possible that Milken was fooled


When we first
together we seemed
wrapped in light and
tenderness, scarcely
daring to touch. How
I longed for him
to hold me, to be
in his arms...


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I needed him
Still to love me, but
in the barn, the place
we
leaned
against the rough
wood, and all I
really wanted to
say was "Kiss me..."


Narcisse
Parfums Chloé · Paris


That evening was
the happiest and most
intense we ever spent.
He had filled the room
with flowers. Sensuous
music drifted up. Then
I was in his arms, and
reality fell away...



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by Boesky's prowess as a liar—if there's one thing the people who knew Boesky agree on, it's that he lied so often his very identity was a lie. But that is to apply a moral judgment to a man motivated by consistently pragmatic considerations. It would be more correct to say that Boesky, an amateur thespian, was an actor playing the part of a financier.

Still, Milken can't say he wasn't warned about Boesky's criminality. At the 1984 High-Yield Bond Conference —better known as "the Predators' Ball"—there was an announcement that dwarfed even the moment when Frank Sinatra stepped onstage as the surprise performer: Drexel was going to use junk bonds to back hostile takeovers. On hearing that, Ivan Boesky perked up. His arbitrage business was all about betting on the outcome of mergers and takeovers; with more companies in play, he'd have more opportunities to place his bets. Even better, Drexel's move offered him a new way to step off the sidelines and become a real factor—with very little of his own money at risk, he could now bid for companies, become an owner, call himself a "merchant banker."

As excited as Boesky was by the prospect of big scores ahead, there was some smaller money to grind out. He embarked on this quest right at the conference, pulling some well-heeled Drexel clients aside and asking them if they'd like to do themselves a favor. He'd already snapped up all the CBS stock he could afford, he said, and the price had moved up; if they helped him out by buying another big chunk, the stock would go up much more. At that point, the members of his little group would average out their costs, unload their positions, and make big profits.

There was a beat missing for these men. Anyone buying more than 5 percent of a stock must notify the S.E.C. If we share profits, we'll have to file as a group, one said—we'll have to reveal our trading. Boesky, who hadn't waited until this moment to commit his first felony, grinned. We won't file, he said—we'll do this on a handshake. Astonished, the men made their apologies and hurried to tell Milken about Boesky's blatantly criminal proposition.

Their warning was unequivocal: Mike, you must not do business with this man.

Maybe you didn't understand what Ivan said, Milken replied.

Perhaps if Michael Milken had had time to reflect, he might have turned away from Boesky. But Drexel had, by that time, already achieved warp speed, raising hundreds of millions of dollars for takeover bids. In this charged environment, Milken was a high-performance machine, best at execution, worst at introspection. He had been brought up not to judge people, and he carried this philosophy onto the trading floor. There, it proved quite useful; beginning as the banker of last resort, Drexel was, by 1984, well on its way to becoming the most profitable investment bank on Wall Street. Clearly, for both Milken and Drexel, there was nothing to be gained by thinking about such unprofitable issues as character.

That November, after reading an article about her husband, Lori Milken tried to slow him down. She had always believed that he would do well, and he had. Now she could satisfy her deepest fantasy—she could buy any hardcover book she wanted. For Lori didn't crave diamonds, wouldn't own a mink, had no thought of collecting art; no one could accuse her of urging her husband to make money so she could put on a show. And yet this article presented her with the unsettling news that Michael had made at least $15 million the previous year.

A few nights later, as the Milkens were getting dressed for a charity event, Lori popped the big question:

"There's no connection between the man and the investment banker," Kennan advised Joseph. "If there's no disaster, Milken will develop clinical symptoms."

Do we really have all that money?

Yes, Michael replied.

Get rid of it, she ordered.

I'm sorry I'm so successful, he said.

It doesn't look good, she insisted. Get rid of it.

Michael reminded her of the $5 million that he had already given to his foundation, the millions more he hoped to give, and the millions he paid in taxes. But he didn't remind her that when she signed their 1983 income-tax return she might have noticed his compensation that year wasn't $15 million but $47.5 million. And he didn't suggest that this year he'd earn even more—$123.8 million.

Dr. Ned Kennan was exactly what people who have never seen a mental-health practitioner think one looks like. His beard was trimmed to resemble the master's. He wore twinkling wire-rimmed glasses. He smoked Gitane cigarettes. He wore tweeds. It wasn't until Kennan spoke that he smashed through stereotypes—he mixed mythical references and street talk, boasted that he'd worked in Israeli intelligence for five years, and openly relished his access to corporate boardrooms.

In the spring of 1985, Fred Joseph became C.E.O. of Drexel, and a worried C.E.O. at that. His concern wasn't the growing movement on Wall Street and in Washington to stop Drexel and its rapacious clients—it was the firm itself. New employees were flooding in, departments were expanding in all directions. Where was Drexel going? How were he and Mike Milken going to build an institution that would outlast them?

And so Fred Joseph reached out to Ned Kennan.

Kennan started interviewing in New York, where he quickly learned that Milken was regarded as a god. He moved on to Beverly Hills, where he interviewed Milken associates. Milken, the embodiment of the Drexel culture, was Kennan's last appointment.

Starting late one afternoon, Kennan says, he spent four hours with Milken. "He did most of the talking," Kennan told me, five years after that meeting. "He stood up, leaning against the wall. The thrust of his conversation was that, with the exception of some research capability on the East Coast, he had no need or use for Drexel Burnham. As he saw it, the whole corporation was there to serve him. He was in a position to share the spoils—not that the others deserved any. Finally, he suggested that he was plotting directions to new horizons. His general attitude was: Fred Joseph doesn't have to know, the client doesn't have to know, only I have to know."

To Kennan, Milken was an egocentric leader with a deep need to be

served, a contempt for his employer, and a compulsion for secrecy that bordered on the fanatical: "He has an enormous drive that impels him to be in front of the crowd at all costs, whether it's cheerleading or controlling his department. He didn't have anger so much as the energy of anger. I sensed that he was a borderline schizophrenic who reintegrates reality in a way that best suits him. He reminded me of my girlfriend when I was fourteen. She said, 'My conscience is very clear. I never use it.' "

Michael Milken has a very different memory of that meeting. As he recalls it, he spent no more than an hour with Kennan. For him to have had four hours to give to anyone in 1985 would have been unlikely; for him to commit so much time to someone in Kennan's profession would have gone against his penchant for privacy. Milken says he didn't understand why Fred Joseph would hire an outsider to plumb the firm's secrets; if this was a job worth doing, it might better be done by someone who had been brought on staff and was likely to remain on staff. Because Kennan struck him as someone who might be consulting for another investment bank the following week, Milken says, he revealed as little as possible.

On one point, Kennan and Milken agree: Milken's reaction to his first encounter with a mind doctor was destined to be negative. But when Kennan started writing, he says, Milken's hostility had no effect on his work. It was, for him, very clear: Drexel wasn't a business, it was a religion, with Milken as God, Joseph as his prophet, and the corporate-finance and high-yield departments as disciples. But the religion had become so successful it was in trouble; Kennan predicted that Drexel would die by the end of the 1980s.

His language was as apocalyptic as his conclusion. "I wrote: 'Beware, you're a one-product company, and without it, you're dead. Beware, you've stepped into the holy chamber of Wall Street and called the others liars and made money—you haven't many friends. Beware, there's a vacuum where you should have an image; you've left it for others to define you. If there's any downward movement, there will be an avalanche, for you'll have no control of your destiny.' "

On the subject of Milken, Kennan rang what he believed was a warning bell. "His life is all transactions—there's no connection between the man and the investment banker," Kennan advised Joseph. "If there's no disaster, Milken will develop clinical symptoms."

In August of 1985, Kennan submitted his report, which ran to one hundred single-spaced pages. As Kennan recalls it, Joseph was horrified by the bluntness of the report—and he thought it was all wrong. Especially about Milken. Joseph didn't think he was arrogant. He did think Milken liked money, but surely not to the point of greed. As for Milken's being a quasi-schizophrenic moving toward a full-blown freak-out, that was completely ridiculous.

"I had a hard time not taking care of people," Milken told his probation officer. "In my desire to please customers, I went too far."

In March of 1989, when Boesky had been joined as a potential witness by several of Milken's co-workers, Michael Milken was indicted on ninety-eight felony counts. He faced a possible 520 years in jail and a fine that could run as high as $1.8 billion. When he was arraigned in Judge Kimba Wood's courtroom, though, he called out "Not guilty" in a voice that suggested he could take much more abuse than the government could ever dish out.

A year later, Michael Milken was a very different man. He walked with a stoop; he no longer rushed everywhere. His friends, his family, and his lawyers all asked the same question: How do you think he is? Privately, they told one another that he was failing, that this prosecution might exact a fatal toll. One day, he said it himself: I don't know how much more of this I can take.

Inside the study of his Encino home on April 24, 1990, as a grand jury in New York was preparing to indict him on as many as a hundred additional counts, Milken's wife and mother sat with him, talking quietly. His lawyers had worked out a deal with the government that called for him to plead guilty to six felonies and pay $600 million in fines—the most counts and the biggest fine in any Wall Street case. His family had voted the night before, with his wife and his mother favoring a fight and a trial. His two sons were split; his daughter was too young to be consulted. What Milken felt, no one quite knew.

Five minutes before the deadline, Arthur Liman sat in his New York office surrounded by silent lawyers and asked his secretary to call Michael Milken at his home.

Hi, Arthur. Did you get any rest?

Liman couldn't be diverted today: It's time, Michael. We have to decide.

There was dead silence in Liman's conference room for the next five minutes.

Milken's conversation was rambling and cryptic. He went over the pros and cons. He talked about his anguish. He said he wanted to end the struggle, but if he did, he feared that everything he stood for would be questioned. He kept coming back to that thought: a lifetime of contribution wiped out with a word. With that, he began to sound like a man undergoing amputation without anesthesia. Toward the end, Liman covered his eyes with his hand.

"O.K.," Milken said suddenly, "we'll take their offer."

Liman was stunned. He'd had no idea how this monologue would end.

Are you positive?

Yes.

Gently, Liman ended the call and contacted the U.S. Attorney's Office. My client, he said, has authorized me to proceed.

In Encino, the client and his wife and his mother hugged one another. They cried bitter, hysterical tears. And then, because the women were now so much stronger than he was, they put Michael Milken to bed.

In the summer of 1990, when his probation officer asked Milken how he and Boesky had come to form a criminal alliance, Milken characterized himself as overbusy and distracted and dominated by Boesky—as a victim. Between 1984 and 1986, Milken told Michalah Bracken, he and his associates had traded in seven thousand securities and carried two thousand positions each day. During that period, Boesky called "thousands of times . . . yelling and screaming and accusing."

Milken's weakness, he implied, was the product of a deep insecurity that he'd never spoken of before and would never mention again. He needed to be needed. He was the Candyman; in a dysfunction-



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al world, he wanted to make everything right for everybody. In essence, he agreed with John Gutfreund of Salomon Brothers, who said, "Milken thought he was in the church business, but he was in the money business."

"I had a hard time not taking care of people," Milken told his probation officer. "In my desire to please customers, I went too far. I personalized too much. I had to be all things to all people. I've always preached that wealth comes from solving the needs of society and is not an end in itself. It's hard to reconcile what I've said with my behavior."

His behavior with Boesky, he concluded, was the result of the client's incessant assault: "The easiest thing was to say, 'I'll make it up to you.' Then I could get on to three or four calls on hold and two people standing nearby waiting to talk to me. I just got him off the telephone and didn't hurt anyone. . . . I believed so much in what I was doing, and that it was right and just. . . . I concentrated on what I wanted to do, and thought, 'Okay, if you want to make money, I'll find you money.' "

In August, Michalah Bracken submitted her report to Judge Wood. In it, the judge got her first look at Milken's wealth. According to a financial statement he submitted, he had $550 million in eight bank accounts, $14 million in nonmarketable securities, and $505 million tied up in more than seventy private investments. The wizard alleged to be worth $5 billion had actually banked about $1.1 billion.

Then came the bigger surprises.

Bracken appreciated that peers talked of Milken as a business "iconoclast" and "visionary." But, she emphasized, he still made time for family, friends, and causes. "The Milken Foundations," she noted, "are now among the largest charitable institutions in the country."

Bracken also understood popular opinion held that greed was Milken's primary motivation. She found, however, that "his wealth is the result of legitimate business activities." Greed played less of a role in this case than a need to solve everybody's problems. "The answer to this offense," she suggested, "may lie in part in his own statement: 'I wanted to be all things to all people.' "

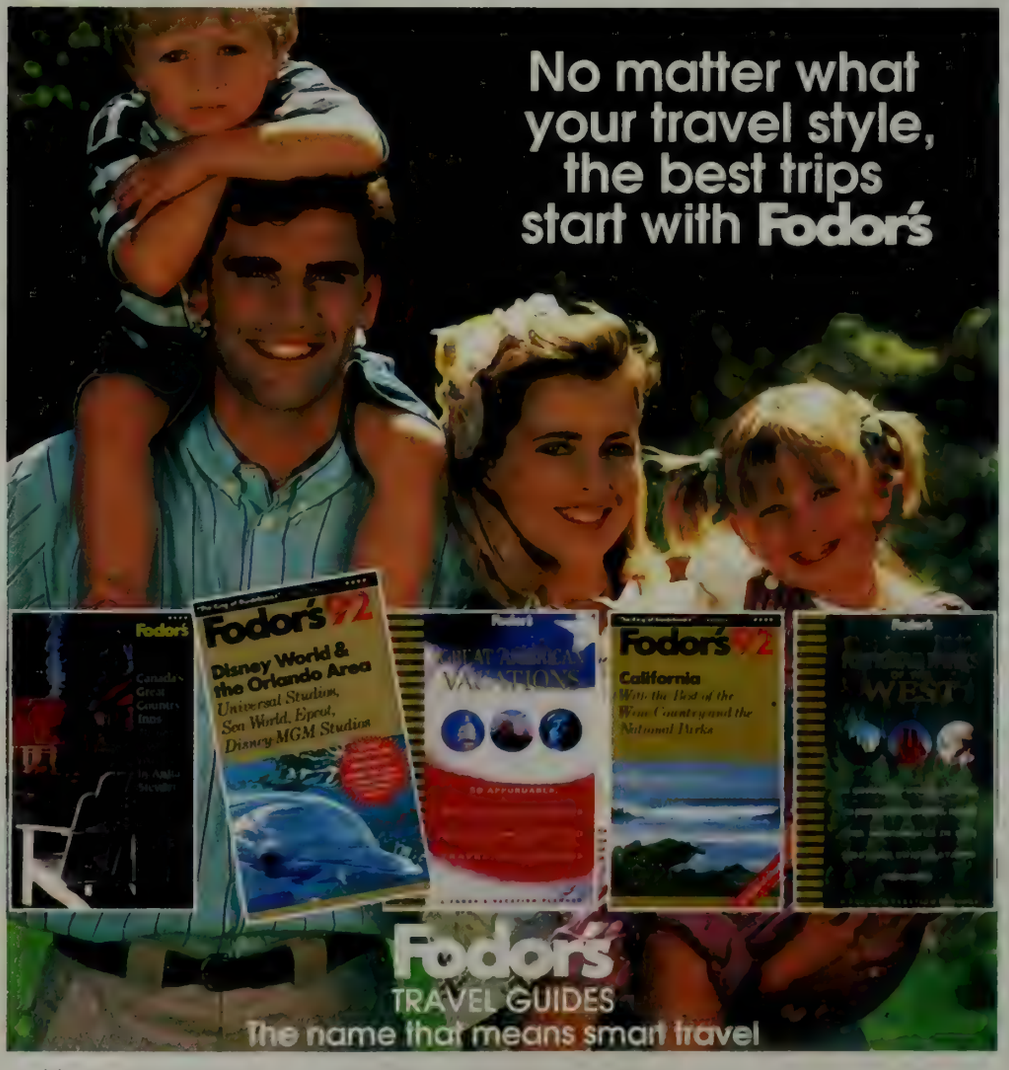
"Among Milken's strengths are his inability to accept defeat, his total commitment to causes he considers 'just and right,' and his vision concerning business and society," she wrote. "His weakness was that, as creator and head of the High Yield Department at Drexel, these convictions were more important than his responsibilities and obligation to conduct business fully within the parameters of the law. Yet, despite his fall, Milken is an individual still able to contribute to society and to create positive changes in the future."

But Milken wasn't to be sentenced on the basis of the probation report, his admitted crimes, his fine, and hundreds of letters praising his innovative financing and his philanthropy. There were many other crimes, the prosecutors argued, and they wanted Judge Kimba Wood to consider them—if she didn't, they feared, Milken might get a lighter sentence than Boesky.

To come to a better understanding of Milken's character, Wood convened a hearing and had the prosecutors present three examples of what they had described as his pervasive criminality. Although they liberally bestowed immunity on former colleagues and clients, the prosecutors were unable to link Milken to these transactions. And in the insider-trading case they chose—a transaction that had nothing to do with Boesky—the prosecutors were unable to convince the judge that any crime had been committed by anyone. So as they drove to court in lower Manhattan for his sentencing on November 21, 1990, Milken and his wife were still able to hope that he might get modest jail time.

Then Judge Wood got to the matter at hand. Although insider trading wasn't an issue here, Milken's offenses were no less criminal for being technical; technical crimes, she argued, were his style. Her view of his offenses was harsh: "You committed crimes that are hard to detect, and crimes that are hard to detect warrant greater punishment in order to be effective in deterring others from committing them." She found no reason to compare his sentence to any other, and in particular to that of Ivan Boesky, who, she noted, had given the government what it called the most extensive and remarkable cooperation in the history of the securities laws.

She appreciated Milken's desire to work with disadvantaged children. He'd have that chance. "Because changes are likely to take place in community programs between today and the day you are released from prison, it would be inappropriate to select a particular



program for you today," she said.

That was the signal, and if Michael Milken didn't catch it, his wife did—behind her dark glasses, Lori lowered her head.

Judge Wood called for Milken to rise.

In the Milken camp, the most widely guessed number had been four years—Boesky-plus-one. What do you anticipate? How bad could it be? Lori Milken had asked Arthur Liman the night before. I don't want to tell you, he said, turning away, but she'd held on to four, held on to it until just now, when she knew: it was going to be beyond belief.

But what astonished was how matter-of-fact this moment felt. All the symbolism would have to be pumped in later—Wood stepped briskly up to the job, and, quickly and what certainly seemed dispassionately, dispensed what she thought was justice.

Probation on one count, two years in prison on each of the others, to be served consecutively—ten years in all. And when that was over, 1,800 hours of full-time community service a year for three years.

The courtroom just stopped. No one had expected anything like this. Liman and Milken stood so dumbstruck Wood had to tell them to sit down.

Court was adjourned a few minutes later, and Milken was led out. The reporters were frozen in place, scribbling away. Lori, head still down, moved fast, arriving in the judge's hallway just after her husband. Everything felt small and cramped, and there were people around—ten years wasn't a number the Milkens could absorb here. Someone led them to a small waiting room and closed the door.

And the madness began.

The cries of Lori and Michael Milken—hysterical, unashamed wails and shrieks, the kinds of sounds that would, in isolation, make you think of animals caught in traps—cut through the chat in the judge's hallway and stopped traffic all the way out by the elevators. People looked at one another, suddenly uncomfortable, hoping for an end. But the cries built, the animal hurt finding new timbres, until even the curious did the smart thing and beat it.

At the airport, the situation was no better. No one had ever seen Milken look so bad. As soon as they were aloft, he began to cry again. All the way to Los Angeles, Lori held him, but he was broken now, and inconsolable.

Below him, as he flew, the news was crossing the land, making its way into the homes of people he had never met. But some of them thought they knew him. They knew him because the insurance companies and pension funds that represented their future had, without asking them, invested their money in junk bonds. They knew him because the savings-and-loans they had always regarded as the safest places to put their nest eggs had high-yield issues. Or because the companies they worked for had been taken over by raiders whose primary interest was slashing and burning their way to the bottom line. Or because their employers, in beating back a raider's attack, had taken on so much debt that survival required massive layoffs.

From the outside, it looks as if no effort of Milken's to gain his early release from jail or mend his reputation is working out.

They'd lost money and security and jobs and certainty, and they didn't want to hear that Michael Milken had created businesses and enriched investors or that Michael Milken was not solely responsible for their distress. As his plane cast its shadow over them, there were many Americans that day who said, in one form or another, "Good! The greedy bastard got his." And in this way, Michael Milken, who'd never been conclusively linked to insider trading, came to be what Kimba Wood's sentence seemed to say—three times guiltier than Ivan Boesky, the biggest villain in the history of Wall Street.

From the outside, it looks as if no effort of Milken's to gain his early release from jail or mend his reputation is working out. He hires Alan Dershowitz, an appellate lawyer who is a lightning rod for controversy, only to be disappointed when Dershowitz adds Mike Tyson to his client list. He pays half a billion dollars to settle civil suits that he might well have won. He applies for a reduction in sentence, listing many reasons why he merits it immediately; the government delays that ruling until it decides whether to call him as a witness in the trial of one of his former associates.

What's particularly painful for Milken is the way he has come to be regarded as a handy punching bag for everything that went wrong in the 1980s. How could it be otherwise? His plea and the sentence that followed largely ended the debate about him—if his image is cartoonlike and unfair, that's unsurprising. These things happen. The world moves on.

Milken's world, in contrast, has stopped. And so he doesn't see that his dealings with Boesky—which look to him like a code of service taken to illegal lengths—are now regarded as illustrative of a general pattern of manipulation. He doesn't see that his incessant quibbling over small factual errors now comes across as a refusal to acknowledge larger truths. He doesn't see that although he may need to express his views on the economy, race, and education, the country may not want his advice.

Milken's problem is that he's trapped in his worldview, a universe away from the emotions and conflicts that rule other people. For a man who genuinely cares for people, he got very far in life without discovering that they are not merely recipients of his help or obstacles to be surmounted. That myopia is, in the end, at the root of Milken's troubles. He is a tragic figure not because, with all his talent, he had criminal intent, but because he never considered that he might be breaking some law.

Had Milken taken time to confront his demons, he might have wondered about his insatiable appetite for work and achievement and his distorted sense of entitlement. He might have looked into the hole in himself that nothing ever filled. He might have questioned his hunger to dominate the world of finance, even if he thought he shared the fruits of his success in the form of charity. Because he didn't take the time, he and his entire operation marched right off a cliff, victims of a mass disconnection from reality.

The ultimate exception, he persists in swimming against the current. Surrender, acceptance, forgiveness, regeneration—the slow stages of natural healing elude him. It's a measure of the distance he has yet to travel that the five most exhilarating—and terrifying—words in the English language are "Collect call from Michael Milken." □

BAWDY AND SOUL

Benny Hill may have outlived his humor's official welcome, but he went down the last of England's unrepentant naughty-boy comics

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

Leave it to *Married . . . with Children* to put things in proper perspective. On a recent episode of the Fox sitcom the Bundy family won a trip to England. "What's England?" asked Kelly, the show's infallible index to bottomless American ignorance.

"It's a country, Kel," her brother, Bud, explained. He could see she needed prompting. "You know, birthplace of Shakespeare?"

Blank.

"Churchill?"

Still blank.

"Benny Hill?"

"Oh," said Kelly, brightening, "the English guy." *Him* she recognized.

For much of the semi-literate world, Benny Hill *was* England, the last human link to the bygone lore of tandem bikes, parasols in the park, sexy governesses, spats. But it wasn't just England he embodied. He did the entire menu of Euro-Man, from the fiery Spaniard in toreador vest to the suave Frenchy in striped shirt and beret. His bon vivants dwelt in the eternal sunshine of P. G. Wodehouse, with the stress on sideways motion rather than snappy wordplay. (Though he could be quite a punster.) He often speeded up the action to a silent-movie flicker, the other characters trailing behind him on the screen like the tail of a Chinese dragon. ("I like it when he runs fast," said Kelly.) His comedy "traveled" because its gibberish bypassed Customs. His leer didn't need translation. Syndicated in nearly a hundred countries, *Benny Hill* reruns ribbon the world, making him comedy's biggest export since Chaplin, who was said to be a fan.



Benny and one of "Hill's Angels": His leer didn't need translation.

The irony was that Hill became bad cheese in his own backyard. After twenty years with Thames Television, he had a five-minute meeting with high muckety-muck John Howard Davies (*boo, hiss*) in which he learned his contract would not be renewed. The official explanation was that his show had slipped in the ratings and was too costly to produce. Rubbish, said the press. The show was never out of the top twenty and earned its return in the overseas markets. No, the real reason Benny Hill was booted was that all the bouncy flesh on his show offended feminist sourpusses. Politically correct comics such as Ben Elton complained that Hill's skirt chasing wasn't funny when women couldn't walk in the park for fear of being raped. Hill was replaced by Rowan Atkinson's stick-figure Mr. Bean, as sexless a twit as ever breathed through the mouth.

A more bitter man might have broke. Donald Taffner, the man responsible for repackaging *The Benny Hill Show* for American audiences, said Hill wasn't so much hurt as "mystified" by the thumbs-down at Thames. Refusing to sulk, he began to rebound. He taped a New York special in which he impersonated Roseanne and Dr. Ruth, had his face slapped in Central Park, and fractured *A Streetcar Named Desire*. ("Why do you drop your clothes on the floor?" "Because they won't stick to the ceiling!") Over the Christmas season BBC's *Omnibus* broadcast a tribute to Hill featuring testimonials from such smoothies as Michael Caine and Burt Reynolds. Hill himself seemed quite chappy on the show, his once wavy brown hair now a banker's white. A solitary man, but he seemed to enjoy his own company. Then when he was hospitalized, Michael Jackson pulled himself away from the cos-



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metics counter long enough to pay a courtesy call. He was becoming recognized at long last as a world-class asset.

This second wind was cut short in April when Hill was found dead in his home in Teddington, slumped in front of the TV, victim of a heart attack. He had been stiff a couple of days before his body was discovered. His manager, Dennis Kirkland, found Hill's flat blanketed with money, "about £100,000 in bank notes littered round his body and £250,000 in uncashed checks." In the suburbs, Hill had managed to create his own sarcophagus. Did he die a happy clam, snug in all his possessions? Or is his death a bleak study in isolation, a fatal bit of cheap irony (beloved by millions, comforted by none)? Perhaps it wasn't a sarcophagus Benny Hill had built, but a costly womb.

Like so many pop phenomena (Elvis being the prime pasta), Benny Hill was an unabashed mama's boy. Although his father peddled contraceptives and suppositories, he was no figure of fun. According to *Saucy Boy,* Leonard Hill's biography of his brother, dear old Dad was a hothead who would round on Benny in his wrath, calling him a dolt and a loser. It was only near the end that Benny and his father achieved diplomatic relations. His mother he always adored. She offered earthy acceptance. "She encouraged us to pee without restraint, whenever we felt like it." One of the few times Hill ever lifted the blinds on his personal life came in the *Omnibus* special when he admitted that after his father died, he wept buckets, but after his mother died, he was dry as a drum. His explanation was that his tears for his father were probably spurred by guilt, since he loved his mother so much more. (Which chimes with Freud's belief that we weep after dreaming of someone's death because some part of our psyche wanted that person gone. Our tears are those of an accomplice.)

After his mother's death, Hill maintained her home as a shrine. He never married, although he had close friendships with two disabled women, one of whom survives him. He was a helpmate to these women, not a lover. He supposedly dated a string of "Hill's Angels" from his show, but the anecdotes concerning these arm trophies have the stale smell of factoids, as do some of his accounts of spurned courtship. He had no room in his life for romance. It was as if the first woman in his life took up all the pillow.

One of the bits I remember best from Benny Hill features him as a baby in a pram, his bosomy governess bending over him, making little moues with her mouth. From his infant perspective her breasts are big smacking treats. The proscenium arch of the pram is his portal of bliss. Although Hill is a peeper and a chaser in his sketches, his pursuit of bimbettes wasn't propelled by a satyr's charging penis. He was more of a putto with a cute little pigtail between his legs. Penetration was never the purpose. What the Benny Hill character sought was a warm, dissolving skin bath of milk-tit immersion. No wonder he couldn't fully connect with real adult women. They came with strings attached, questions, demands, moods, snarls in their hair. His perfect woman was a quiet sack of understanding.

Benny Hill never stopped innovating. He treated TV as a magic box.

Dressing in women's clothes allowed him to coddle himself, to *become* his mother. As a child he would raid his mother's wardrobe to imitate Mae West. When he went into drag on his show, a great peace seemed to descend on him. The padding he wore made him even more buttery. His sighs seemed to occupy the whole afternoon. His women weren't butch gargoyles with bullethole beauty marks, like Barry Humphries's Dame Edna or the caricatures that escaped from the mental ward of Milton Berle's wardrobe. They were housewives, indomitable and yet demure, like Margaret Thatcher with about three fewer coats of shellac. His portly Blanche DuBois was a lilac vision.

Of course, it's reductive to remember Benny Hill solely as a purveyor of sex farce. His cop parodies (*Kojak, Ironside, Starsky and Hutch*) were priceless. He also spoofed movie attitudes. Never shown in America is a brilliant black-and-white takeoff Hill did of *Rebel Without a Cause* movies, which had him lounging around in an itchy undershirt, looking as if he'd dipped his comb in a can of oil, muttering about the Meaninglessness of It All. "Me and my girlfriend were gonna move in with her parents," shrug, "but her parents are living with my parents." The late-afternoon look of this piece was beautiful, recalling and preserving an entire extinct line of British neo-realism. It was the work of a man at one with his medium.

Hill never stopped innovating. The hedonism of his humor was a cover for selfless application. He treated TV as a magic box. He was the English Ernie Kovacs in his use of editing as a surrealistic tool. Early in his career he cloned himself to play all four members of *Juke Box Jury*. He demonstrated the pitfalls of squeezing a wide-screen spaghetti Western onto a small screen. (The camera seemed to pan for miles.) Perhaps Hill's most famous television feat was the striptease he did in which he removed not clothes but body parts. To the bump-and-grind of David Rose's "The Stripper," he tore off, twirled, and discarded his entire set of bones, the backdrop so black each bone looked spectral. Soon only the skull was left, then it too was tossed aside, leaving. . .nothing. Conceptually, it was a beautiful piece, expressing Hill's desire to disappear into his act until no human trace remained. To unzip himself down to zero.

In his estrangement from personal entanglement, Benny Hill epitomized Pop culture, its quest to postpone adulthood indefinitely by finding a mother substitute in the airwaves—an electronic nurturing. In an essay titled "Pop Is Mom," Albert Goldman wrote, "Sexless, mindless, without feeling, Pop man, physically vigorous but emotionally frail, sustains a precarious existence at the breasts of the 'media,' which provide him with the measured routines, the soothing sights and sounds, and the benignly looming presences of the nursery."

Sounds like Benny Hill in a psychological nutshell. Yet in the nursery of his anonymous flat he managed to find comfort and creative outlet. The infant formula of his comedy conveyed a pure spirit of play. At the end, he was still planning ahead. Around his body when he died were notes for future sketches. Television was the last thing he saw. A true child of the media, he died in Mother's arms. □


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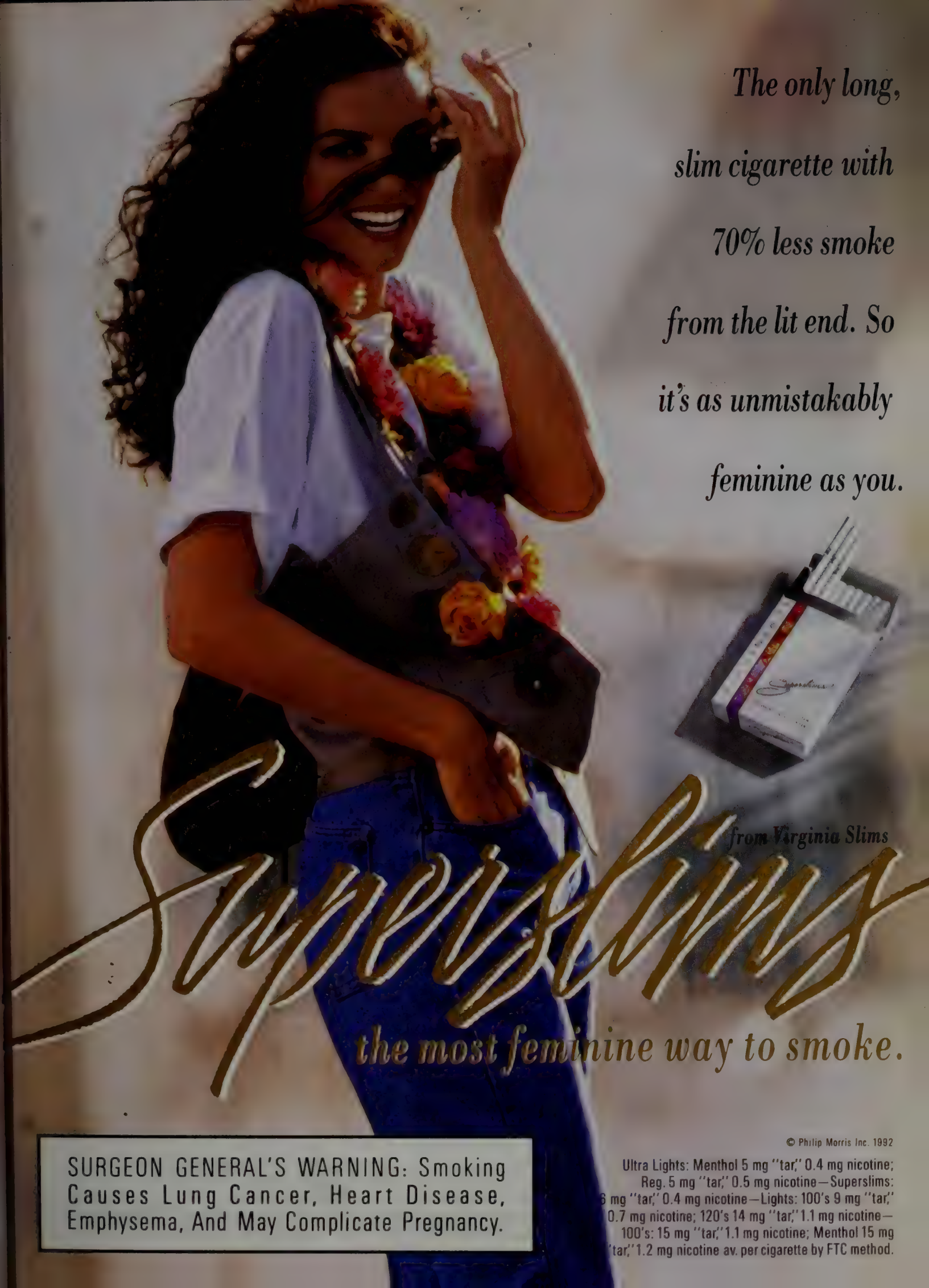
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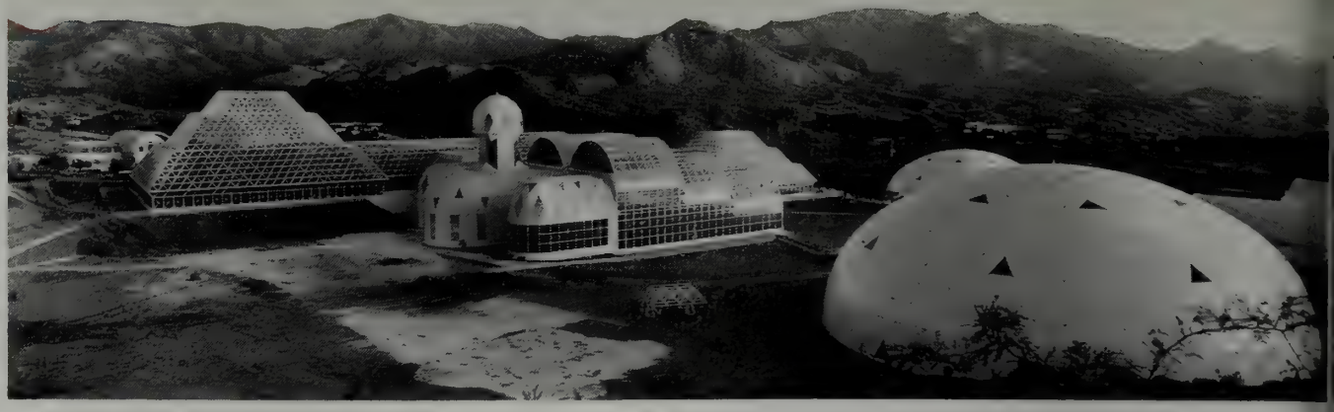



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New Age



Dome on the range: The Biosphere 2 compound, an hour's drive north of Tucson.

BIOSPHERE AND LOATHING

An investigation into the bad rap on Ed Bass's strange obsession—is Biosphere 2 for real, or a brave new boondoggle?

BY JOHN SEABROOK

Ed Bass, second son of the fifth-wealthiest family in the United States, allows himself one material excess: cowboy boots. Clothes, women, art, houses, and other traditional comforts of rich men do not appear to interest him. He flies commercial airlines and drives himself to work. For a long while he drove a Ford Escort; a few months ago he gave it to his secretary and bought a Toyota Camry. However, "I do like boots," he says somewhat sheepishly. He always wears boots. You can see him in boots at black-tie fund-raising dinners for the various conservation groups he supports. Sometimes, if the occasion is not too formal, he will also wear a tuxedo cut like a western jacket, which, with his upright bearing and handsome face, makes him look a little like Wyatt Earp.

Tonight he has on a pair of brown hand-tooled calf-leather boots. Also a blue blazer, with epaulets. He is descending the steep flight of steps that leads from the Inn at the Biosphere ("Rooms with a View of the Future") to the Biosphere Café. Before him are the Quarantine Stations and the Greenhouses and the Insectary and Mission Control, and Biosphere 2 itself, faintly aglow in the last rays of the Arizona sun.

Unlike his older brother, Sid, whose divorce from Anne Bass and remarriage to Mercedes Kellogg was much publicized, and unlike his younger brother Bob, who is one of the best-known moguls in the country, Ed Bass has always managed to remain out of the public eye. Until fairly recently, he was able to pursue his far-flung interests, of which Biosphere 2 is only a part, in relative anonymity. He used to go to his ranch in Australia for up to six months out of the year, where he rounded up cows, mended fences, and trained horses, and where the only way to reach him was to leave a message with the Royal Flying Doctor Service radio network. Now that has changed. Biosphere 2 has dragged the spotlight his way.



Brother from another planet? Billionaire Ed Bass always wanted "to fix fences, to ride horses, to gather cattle."

Since eight biospherians began their two-year stay inside the 3.15-acre glass enclosure last September 26—a day everyone on-site refers to simply as Closure—Biosphere 2's public relations have been a disaster. The project has been called a fraud, a fake, and a theme park. It is said that some of the administrators are members of a cult; it is said that Ed Bass belongs to the cult. Much has been made of the fact that a CO_2 scrubber, the sort of machine used in submarines to purify the air supply, was placed inside what was purported to be a self-sustaining system; that fresh air was pumped in several months after Closure; and that one of the biospherians, who had to exit briefly for medical reasons (she chopped off the end of her finger), returned with a bag of supplies. A small band of Biosphere 2 dissidents—employees and consultants who have quit in anger—are available to supply damning allegations to the media about their former associates.

From the tone of some of the articles, one might suppose they had been written

PHOTOGRAPHS, TOP, BY SKEET MCAULEY; BOTTOM, BY GLENN KILLMAN

There are three indispensable items for every Finnish fishing excursion: a fishing pole, a fishing buddy, and, of course, Finlandia. (As you might guess, one of these items may be a little more essential than the other two.)



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about the *Challenger* disaster. The zealotry with which the press has attacked Biosphere 2 puzzles Bass. After all, the guiding principle behind the project is to help the planet. The idea is that by creating a model of the earth, endowed with a representative sampling of life, scientists will be able to better understand how it works. How do higher levels of carbon dioxide affect agriculture? How do ecosystems in deserts, oceans, and rain forests interact? Whether Biosphere 2 can answer questions like these remains to be seen.

"It's been an interesting experience for me," Bass says of the news coverage. "I'm often not happy about it, but it's taught me a lot about how the media works. I was extremely surprised in the early years how Biosphere 2 was championed and built up, and how positive the press was. I've been dismayed to see the 180-degree reversal. There's a story to be had in taking the opposite approach, being highly critical, tearing it down." At the same time, Bass feels that mistakes have been made on the project. "I think there are some things that the management of Biosphere 2 has handled just terribly, as far as relations with the media. We've done a very poor job of it, and we've suffered greatly. It's opened the opportunity for this type of story."

Recently, Bass asked eight well-known scientists to review the quality of the research and the competence of the team managing Biosphere 2. One of these scientists designed the Biosphere's rain forest, and others have had dealings with Biosphere's management, which raises some questions about their impartiality. Still, Bass hopes that the committee's report, which will be made public in July, will dispel the cloud of flakiness and fakery that has gathered over the experiment. "Having an advisory committee is extremely important, because they can bring a perspective to things like this," he says.

That is why Bass is here this evening. Several of the scientists on the review committee are convening with the people they will be reviewing, a kind of informal get-together before a day of meetings tomorrow. A gust of laughter sweeps out of the Biosphere Café. Bass walks toward it, his bootheels ringing in the quiet desert evening.

Inside the Biosphere Café, a curious performance is under way. It is useful to keep in mind that Biosphere 2, taken as a whole, is a kind of gigantic performance piece. It is perhaps the most elaborate and expensive performance in the history of drama. Its scientific credibility may be open to debate, but as an ongoing happening, a 1990s version of the Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test, it is brilliant. The scene inside the bar this evening is only a part of the larger performance, though a highly watchable part of it.

One half of the group is made up of prominent names in the U.S. scientific establishment. Tom Lovejoy, who is director of external affairs at the Smithsonian, is among them, as are Jerry Soffen, the head scientist of NASA's *Viking* missions to Mars, and Steve O'Brien, of the National Institutes of Health. The other half of the group are officers of Space Biosphere Ventures, the company that runs Biosphere 2. These people are not scientists by profession; they may be scientists in the Nietzschean sense, explorers for knowledge, but insofar as they have professional training, it is in acting.

Donald Spoon, who is a biologist at Georgetown University, is asking Marie Harding, who is vice president of finance with S.B.V., about the health of the eight biospherians. Their weight loss is of particular concern to the Scientific Advisory Committee. Food has been scarcer than anticipated. The bees, which were supposed to pollinate some of the vegetables, died. Root fungus has reduced the pea crop, and mites have gotten into the potatoes. The biospherians have been out in the fields with their portable hair dryers, trying to drive the mites away, but without success. One of the biospherians has dropped from 208 pounds to 156, and most of the others have lost between 8 and 15 percent of their body weight. Spoon says he saw several of the biospherians via live video hookup on *Good Morning America* recently. "I was shocked at how thin they were," he says.

"There are some things that the management of Biosphere 2 has handled just terribly, as far as relations with the media," says Bass.

"They're on a low-cal diet," Harding responds. "It's perfectly natural to lose some weight."

Well, says Spoon, he is concerned the biospherians may be too weak to dive in the man-made ocean. "I'm just saying what if someone is in the ocean and he or she blacks out..."

"I think that's a worst-case scenario."

Margret Augustine, who is in charge of the day-to-day operation of Biosphere 2, is near the bar. She is thirty-nine, one of eight children of an auto mechanic in Canada, who never attended college, who had no formal architectural training and no scientific training, and who co-designed and is administering one of the best-known scientific endeavors in the world. (She has at various times referred to herself as the "co-architect," which has gotten her into trouble, since she isn't a real architect; now she has backed off that claim and is simply calling herself a designer.)

For a reporter, Augustine can be a difficult person to get to see, especially in this time of biosphere-bashing. One must penetrate the folds of intrigue that cloak the inner workings of Biosphere 2 from the outside world. "Look," says one of her battalion of P.R. people. "I'm going to give you Margret. I promise. Only I can't give her to you right now, because Margret is a little upset with the press right now. I can give you Buchthal now. O.K.? Maybe Buchthal can get you Margret."

Buchthal turns out to be Stanley Buchthal, a New York–based consultant for Biosphere 2. It is hard to say what Buchthal does, exactly, except that he merchandises. He started out in the jeans business, then got into banking, then movies. He co-produced the movie *Hairspray*. It was Buchthal who helped get Woody Harrelson and Steve Guttenberg to come to Closure, and he hopes to produce a "huge ecological concert" here when the biospherians come out in September 1993. He is six feet tall, recently tanned from his two weeks on the Coast, bearded, with longish hair.

"Me and my partner Aurellio [who happens to be Dino De Laurentiis's nephew] took our wives out to Canyon Ranch in August 1990," says Buchthal by way of explaining how he hooked up with Biosphere 2. "I'd seen some stuff about the biosphere in the press, but I didn't know much about it. So one day we went up to take a look. On the way back Aurellio starts saying how we should do a monster picture in

Biosphere 2. You know, there's a monster loose in the biosphere, eating the biospherians until there's only one left—an *Aliens* type of thing. I said, 'Excuse me, Aurellio. I am not interested in making that picture.' I didn't realize it at the time, but it was hitting me how important this thing was. I mean, it sounds corny, but do you know that line from *Field of Dreams*—'If you build it, they will come'? That's the feeling I was getting. This was so brash, so big. I said, I've got to figure out how to get involved.''

Buchthal has big plans for Biosphere 2. ''This is like spreading the gospel! This could be the beginning of the first ecological city. We're talking to the biggest people in Japan. We're talking to Mexico City about licensing our waste-management and water-recycling systems. I'm deep into this stuff. It's exciting. It isn't like going to Hollywood and getting the shit kicked out of you by some agent.''



After speaking with Buchthal, the reporter is summoned to Mission Control, the corporate headquarters of Biosphere 2. It is a white, futuristic-looking building right across the street from the biosphere. In its corridors there is much activity. Officials hurry along in Biosphere 2 lab gear. Technicians converse with biospherians on walkie-talkies. Engineers discuss today's weather inside the biosphere.

The reporter is told that Margret would like him to speak to four of the biospherians before speaking to her. He is escorted upstairs to the corporate boardroom. It resembles other corporate boardrooms—a large rectangular table with chairs around it—except that it has a big-screen TV at the front, and a camera, so that the two biospheres can confer via video hookup.

A biospherian, Mark Nelson, appears on the screen. He seems a likable fellow. He is upbeat about life inside the biosphere. His face is much thinner than it is in the photo used in the promotional material. There has reportedly been some disagreement among the biospherians about whether or not to break into the three months' worth of food supplies that were stored inside the biosphere before Closure. Abigail Alling appears on the screen, also looking very thin, then Linda Leigh.

As he talks to the biospherians, the reporter's mind wanders onto various scenarios, fed by various things he has heard. Perhaps the biospherians are starving and would like to leave, but the people running the experiment won't let them out, fearing further ridicule in the press. Roy Walford appears. Walford, sixty-seven years old, author of a book on longevity called *The 120-Year Diet*, looks the best of any of the biospherians. The reporter asks Walford whether it feels like he's next door. ''No,'' says Walford, ''I feel I am far out in space.''



Closure encounters: Biospherians Roy Walford and Jane Poynter, *top*, inspecting vegetation in June 1990. Margret Augustine and biospherian Mark Van Thillo, *above*, surveying the view from the biosphere tower in March 1991.

Augustine's office is down the hall. It has a fine view into the rain-forest section of the biosphere. From another window one can see the charming 1950s Mission-style house on a neighboring hilltop where Augustine herself lives. She has on a smock-length aubergine jacket, a black skirt and top, red lipstick over a pert, attractive mouth, and a large white orb on her finger that matches her orb pendant and orb earrings. She begins by telling the reporter in no uncertain terms what she thinks of him and his magazine. The reporter has the feeling he has been sent to the principal's office. Her spleen vented, the interview begins. Augustine is charming. She puts her head to one side, giggles girlishly; her voice becomes dreamy and rapturous.

''Biosphere 2 is incredible. I mean, I'm involved in the project, so I shouldn't speak so highly of it, but I think it's one of the most absolutely incredible, beautiful structures in the world.'' She gestures out the window with a jeweled hand. ''It's breathtaking. I look out my window when I'm talking on the telephone; it's absolutely inspiring. It gives me a big sense of pride that people, all people, have the ability to create these incredibly wonderful, magical, beautiful things around the world.''

Augustine's supporters contend a personality like hers is necessary to get a thing like Biosphere 2 built. To create seven distinct ecosystems, fill each ecosystem with plants, bugs, birds—3,500 different species in all—add eight humans, and enclose the whole thing in glass in the desert is to endure the ultimate contracting nightmare, and only a person as type-A as Augustine could have pulled it off. The same qualities have caused some people to regard her as the Leona Helmsley of Biosphere 2. A guide who violates the uniform Augustine has prescribed—white top with Biosphere logo, khaki pants, tennis sneakers—risks her terrible displeasure. A maid at the Inn at the Biosphere who does not drag her cart into the room when cleaning it, as Augustine insists, is liable to catch hell. Biospherians who have displeased her are well acquainted with her wrath. This situation is not so dire as that of HAL, the homicidal computer in the movie *2001*, but an interesting potential is there. Perhaps that is a story line Buchthal and Aurellio could explore.

Augustine feels that allegations of fraud at Biosphere 2 are ridiculous, given that the money all belongs to Ed Bass. The bad press, she adds, is fueled mostly by a small number of critics who occupied marginal roles in Biosphere 2 and who

PHOTOGRAPHS: TOP, BY CHRISTIAN VOULGAROPOULOS; BOTTOM, BY D. P. SNYDER

have a personal interest in seeing the project fail. "I consider myself to be a fairly logical person," she says, "but these things I read about Biosphere 2 make absolutely no sense. They don't add up. *Newsweek* prints a story saying that there's a boatload of dead fish every day in the biosphere. The fact is if you took all the fish in the biosphere they still wouldn't fill up a boat. [The *Newsweek* story in fact said that dead fish are scooped up by a boat each day.] There is absolutely no fraud at the biosphere. Why build a glass house if you've got something to hide? Why do people print this nonsense? There are so many worse things in the world. I don't understand it, really.

"People say Biosphere 2 is an uncontrolled experiment. I say, Well, the world is an uncontrolled experiment. I grew up on Lake Erie, and I remember in the summer you couldn't hardly open the window because of all the dead fish. So there's an example of an uncontrolled experiment. That's the situation around the planet."

A stricken-looking employee, in need of Augustine's O.K. on something, pokes her head into the office.

"Can I ask you. . . ?"

"Not now."

"One question?"

"I said not now."

The employee flinches and retreats.

The visiting scientists try to carry on their conversations as Bass comes into the Biosphere Café, but it is difficult not to stare at him. For one thing, he is a striking-looking man: six feet two, slim, with blue eyes and a boyish, trustworthy face. His hair is longish, going gray, trimmed by Donna Rogers, who is a hairdresser in Fort Worth and whom Bass describes as "the woman I see the most of." For another thing, Bass is a saintly figure among scientists. He is one of the largest private supporters of environmental projects in the world. He owns part of a rain forest in Puerto Rico, a solar-powered hotel in Kathmandu, and he conducts agricultural experiments on his 500,000 acres of ranchland in Australia. He serves on the boards of the New York Botanical Garden, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research, Education, and Conservation. He recently gave $20 million to Yale, his alma mater, to establish an institute of biospheric studies.

"Ed is a very special person," says Jane Goodall. "So many people are born with money and do nothing with it. Ed does so much with his." "The common denominator in all his projects," says Bruce Bunting, a vice president of the World Wildlife Fund, "is that Ed Bass wants to build a better world."

One might suppose that great wealth such as Bass has possessed since he was a teenager—wealth now approximating a billion dollars—would, by the time a man reached forty-seven, make him behave, at least in a small way, like an asshole. But Ed Bass is the nicest person you will meet. He is idealistic, intelligent, modest, thoughtful. It is almost as if he is compensating for the aura of wealth by being self-effacing. His speaking voice is at a pitch that sounds perpetually quizzical. Answering questions about himself obviously embarrasses him. "Of all the things that I do," he says, "the thing I feel most competent at and really in many ways enjoy the most is my ranching activities. When I was a kid I was always interested in ranching, but I was never allowed to do very much hands-on stuff. I was the owner's kid, you know. To fix fences, to ride horses, to gather cattle, to train horses—all this stuff I just organically love to do. I've learned enough about it that I feel I make a pretty good rancher. I can see what needs to be done and I know how to get it done."

One biospherian has dropped from 208 pounds to 156, and most of the others have lost 8 to 15 percent of their body weight.

Outside, in the parking lot, the last of the tour buses is rolling away. The tram has shut down for the evening. Today, 602 people have visited "the Human Experiment." Most of them paid $11.95 to get onto the grounds, and, on average, dropped another $10 in the Biosphere Café and another $10 on Biosphere 2 T-shirts, shot glasses, pens, and mini-biospheres. The $19,000 in receipts is no doubt well below Biosphere 2's daily operating cost—though Bass chooses not to reveal that figure—to say nothing of earning a return on his $150 million investment. But it must be remembered that the biosphere is only eight months old. Bass has said he would like to keep the experiment going for a hundred years. Already another crew of biospherians is training off the coast of Belize on a replica of a Chinese junk.

Some people believe that Bass's investment in Biosphere 2 will one day make him richer than any of his brothers. Bass himself would never say something like that, though he will say he hopes that technology developed at Biosphere 2 will eventually make him a profit on his investment. He is also interested in "doing everything in business absolutely honestly and honorably. That was something that was explicitly transferred to me, growing up. Sometimes that can cost you a lot of money, but it's far more important than money." His idealism is a quality Stanley Buchthal, for one, finds remarkable. "The guy is a major, major visionary. I mean, he's thought about this stuff. And—here's the amazing thing—the guy isn't even leveraged!"

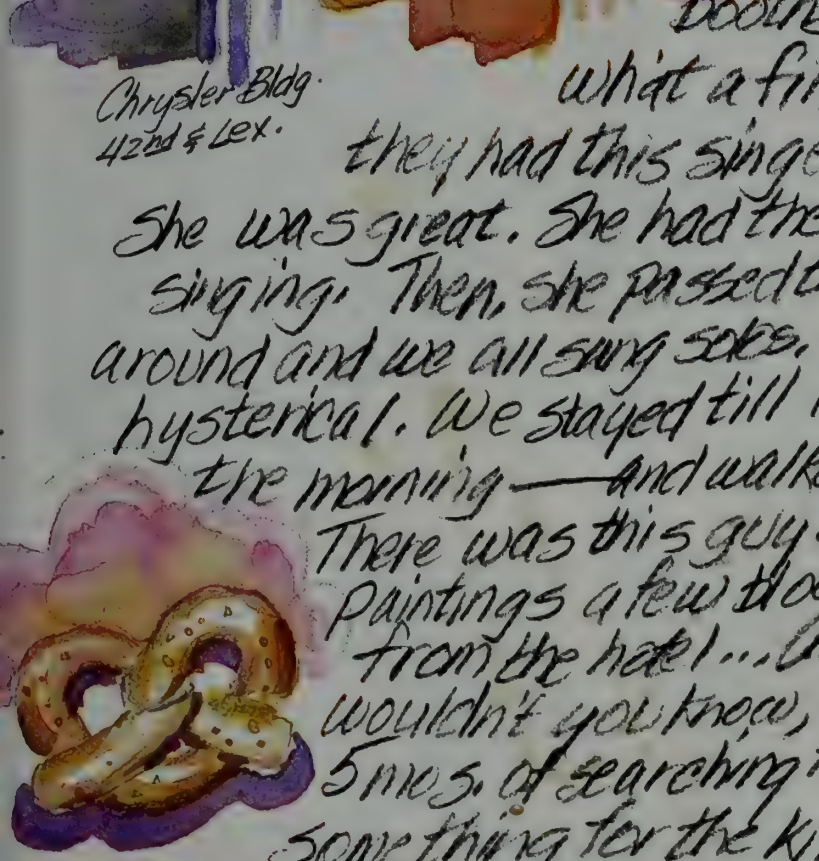
The Biosphere 2 tour begins in the Orientation Center, where there is a film that attempts to explain what the project is all about. There are many answers to this question, and at different times in the young life of Biosphere 2 different answers have received emphasis. Biosphere 2 is a prototype of a colony on Mars. Biosphere 2 is a test of the Gaia hypothesis, which says, in essence, that if you take all the elements of life and throw them together they will find an equilibrium that allows the whole culture to live, and that equilibrium is God; in this sense, Biosphere 2 is an attempt to capture God under glass and observe Him, like a firefly. Biosphere 2 is an experiment in CO_2 management and waste recycling, which will help scientists to better understand the atmosphere and recycling system of Biosphere 1—our planet. Biosphere 2 is a commercial enterprise established to sell new technology as well as biospheres. Who will want to buy a biosphere? Perhaps they'll be set up in arctic regions, or in deserts, or in northern New Jersey. Or perhaps people of the future will have biospheres in their backyards, as their grandparents once had bomb shelters.

The crowd emerges, blinking, into the bright sunshine, where their guide, Claudio, introduces himself. Visitors are not allowed anywhere unescorted.

Biosphere 2 sits on a ridge overlooking the Cañada del Oro, a beautiful, undulating expanse of rock, sand, and saguaro cacti about an hour north of Tucson. Beyond the valley are the



After the show, we just headed down Broadway and fell into this charming cappuccino place. We were both still full from dinner, but we couldn't resist. Cozy little booths... A jazz ensemble. What a find. Oh, the best part— they had this singer come on. She was great. She had the whole crowd singing. Then, she passed the mic around and we all sang solos. It was hysterical. We stayed till 1:45 in the morning — and walked back. There was this guy selling paintings a few blocks from the hotel... and wouldn't you know, after 5 hrs. of searching for something for the kitchen wall, we found it in 2 minutes. You should've seen us. I don't know what was bigger — the painting or the grins on our faces. And all I kept thinking was



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Santa Catalina Mountains, which, though it is seventy-five degrees today, have snow on their peaks. In the sixties Motorola owned this property. It built the Orientation Center and the bungalows—now the Inn at the Biosphere—as a training center for Motorola executives. Knowing this helps to explain the peculiar atmosphere of Biosphere 2. The place feels much more like a corporate estate—say, a pharmaceutical-company headquarters—than like Disneyland. Security guards roam the perimeter in golf carts.

Claudio shares inspiring anecdotes about the biospherians. The tour group learns that they made their own pizza last week, that they hope to get two cups of coffee a week out of their coffee tree, that Mark Van Thillo, the Belgian biospherian, is even thinking of trying to make chocolate from the cacao plants. The biospherians are presented as model citizens of a new age, skilled in dentistry, chef-level cooks, divers, filmmakers, musicians, scientists. The crowd inspects the greenhouse where plants were housed before being put inside Biosphere 2. The smell is the fecund, almost fecal smell of one's childhood terrarium. The air is oppressively hot and moist. Glasses fog up immediately; hair curls. The next greenhouse has pigs, goats, and chickens, as does Biosphere 2. Here the smell is very high. One wonders about the smell inside Biosphere 2.

Someone up front asks a question. "Question," Claudio calls out. "How do the biospherians butcher their food? Answer: The biospherians are all trained in the latest and most humane techniques of butchery, using stun guns."

Emerging from the greenhouses, the crowd comes onto the beginnings of a Main Street, Eco-Town, U.S.A. Now there is only a gift shop and the "Meet the Biospherians" exhibition—you get to write down your questions for the biospherians, and then, in a little theater, their pre-recorded answers are played on a screen. But signs of construction are everywhere. Plans have been filed in Tucson to build a resort hotel, a golf course, and additional accommodations. There is talk of making Biosphere 2 a corporate retreat, where business leaders could come to be greened, and of setting up a Space University and a Space Camp, so that kids could spend some time on another planet, and of building miniature biospheres, in which paying guests could be sealed on a weekly or monthly basis.

At the end of the street is the biosphere itself, shining fiercely in the sun. Viewed lengthwise—with the rain forest at one end, then the ocean, then the African savanna, then a cliff, then the desert—it is quite beautiful. On the hill above it is a massive air-conditioning unit—without air-conditioning the temperature inside could quickly rise to 150 degrees—and on the other side is a large generator, run on natural gas, which supplies Biosphere 2 with power.

"Question," Claudio calls out. "What sort of feminine-hygiene products do the biospherians use? The biospherians use natural sponges. Also, instead of toilet paper, they have bidets."

Everyone peers into the biosphere, hoping to spot a biospherian engaged in a task. Claudio says he fears the biospherians may be in their human habitat, eating lunch. Here, nose pressed to the glass, one feels oneself close to the essential mystery of whatever Biosphere 2 is all about. In the Middle Ages, tourists went to cathedrals to see women who had imprisoned themselves for life in small cells near the altar. Maybe the biospherians are the anchorites of our age, willing to give up their freedom, go hungry, breathe who knows what quality of air, drink the water they pee into (after it has been through Biosphere 2's patent-pending water-recycling system), all for the sake of our planet. Or maybe not.

"There is absolutely no fraud at the biosphere," says Augustine. "Why build a glass house if you've got something to hide?"

"Question," Claudio says. "What happens if the biospherians don't get along?" He looks out over the crowd, composed mostly of elderly people, and waits for an answer. One man is wearing a hat that says, "Retired! Don't Ask Me to Do a Damn Thing."

"Answer: They get together, talk about it, and work out their problems."

At the Biosphere Café, Bass moves around the room, shaking hands with people, saying "Pleasure, pleasure" sort of shyly. He blinks a lot, a kind of mild tic he gets when he is nervous. He grins and his dimples show. He becomes intrigued with the state-of-the-art cash register at the bar. Margret Augustine breezes by. "Oh, we can't let him play with that," she says gaily, taking Ed by the hand. "He'll be at it all night!"

"Well!" says one of the scientists. "You must just be on top of the world."

"Ye-es," says Bass hesitantly.

"Have you seen 'Meet the Biospherians'?" someone asks. Bass says he has not seen it. "Oh, you must. It's marvelous."

How was it, observers sometimes ask, that Ed Bass chose the group he did to run Biosphere 2? And would he be wise to make a change? "Why Ed Bass let these people run this thing, I don't know," says Rocky Stewart, who designed some of the software for Biosphere 2, and who has been one of the public critics of the project. "Basically these people are incompetent. A lot of stuff has had to be done twice, or redesigned, because these people don't know what they're doing."

To understand how Bass is connected with these people, we must go back in time. His great-uncle Sid Richardson, the son of a Fort Worth saloonkeeper, who discovered the Keystone Field in West Texas and who was the richest man in America in 1957, died in 1959, and left Ed and his three brothers, Sid, Bob, and Lee, $2.8 million each. Perry Bass, their father, pooled the brothers' money, and by 1969, a year after Ed graduated from Yale, the pot was worth $50 million. During the 1970s, thanks in part to Sid and their father's smart investments, and in part to the Arab oil embargo, the Bass brothers became extremely rich. In the early 1980s they became even richer by threatening to take over Marathon Oil, then allowing themselves to be bought out for a $160 million profit. In 1984 they reprised this greenmail maneuver with Texaco and made a $450 million profit. Then they bought $478 million worth of Disney; by 1991 their shares were worth $2.8 billion.

Of all the Bass children, Ed was the one who appeared least reconciled to the lot of a billionaire. His father recalls him saying as a boy, "I never want to be part of the family business—I want to do something by myself." In 1968 he enrolled in the Yale School of Architecture. During one summer he went to New Mexico, got involved in developing a condominium, and didn't go back to school. He lived outside of Albuquerque for four years, designing adobe structures, trading Indian jewelry and rugs, studying acting, letting his hair grow down to *(Continued on page 66)*

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PORTRAITS BY ANNIE LEIBOVITZ.

GAP

(Continued from page 56) his waist. In 1974 he moved up to Santa Fe.

Not far outside of Santa Fe was a dry, windswept piece of land on which sat the Synergia Ranch. About thirty people had established a kind of commune there, though the word "commune" was not used. Commune suggested left-wing politics and hippie romanticism, the sorts of things that were not encouraged on the ranch. The members were mostly young, and many of them were from well-off, Ivy League backgrounds. A historian, Laurence Veysey, who spent five weeks on the ranch researching his book *The Communal Experience*, wrote that the group was "exactly the kind of people who would have become leaders in the established order if the times had not been peculiarly out of joint."

The purpose of life on the ranch, according to Veysey, was to strip away all traces of middle-class American culture and to prepare oneself for a new kind of civilization. Work was the primary means of accomplishing this: building houses, gardening, producing arts and crafts. In the afternoon, people were required to study a kind of science called ecotechnics, which, it was felt, would be an essential attainment for all citizens of the new age. In the late afternoons there were theatrical exercises. Occasionally the group, traveling in a bus as the Theater of All Possibilities, would perform its plays in surrounding communities. Everyone received new names: Firefly, Green, Honey, Valentine.

The leader of the ranch was John Allen. Allen had been born on a farm in Oklahoma, drifted in and out of colleges, organized labor, spent a year in the army, worked at a uranium mine, and got a metallurgy degree from the Colorado School of Mines, where he played center on the football team. Then he went to Harvard, where he got an M.B.A. He became an executive with David Lilienthal, an international energy firm. (He later wrote a book of management philosophy called *Succeed*.) In another era he might have risen to some top corporate post; instead he yielded to those peculiarly out-of-joint times. In the early sixties he quit his job and walked across North Africa. He stopped along the way in Tangier, moved through the Near East, and ended up in Laos, where he lived for a while, studying Buddhism.

In the mid-sixties he returned to the U.S. and settled in New York, where he wrote poetry and plays under the name Johnny Dolphin. He became deeply influenced by the writings of a Russian mystic, Gurdjieff, who taught that self-enlightenment could be attained only through an arduous program of physical and spiritual discipline—denial, punishment, correction—supervised by an all-powerful teacher. Allen became such a teacher to a small band of followers, mostly actors he had met through his theatrical productions. In 1967 the group moved to Haight-Ashbury, where it became larger and better-known. In 1968, Allen's wife at the time, Marie, who had some money through her family, bought the ranch in New Mexico, and the group moved there.



Star trekker: Biosphere guru John Allen was born in Oklahoma and wants to die on Mars.

Dinners generally took the form of teaching sessions. Usually Allen would talk about Buddhism or Sufi poetry or Buckminster Fuller or ecotechnics or his thoughts upon seeing two monkeys copulating in the shadow of the Taj Mahal. Sometimes, abruptly, he would fly into a rage. Veysey wrote, "Calmly in control of himself one minute, in the next he will be shouting the most hurtful words conceivable in a furious assault upon the ego of some trapped individual."

Then, abruptly, the rage would end. Allen would again be the inspiring teacher. "Western civilization isn't simply dying. It's dead," he would say. "We are probing the ruins to take whatever is useful for the building of the new civilization to replace it. This new civilization will be planetary. The whole earth will be our home. We are no longer Americans, or Westerners, even though as individuals we were once raised in that tradition. We will build a series of centers in various parts of the world to demonstrate the new way of life. This ranch is merely our first training-ground." Where the money for this new planetary civilization would come from was unclear.

In 1974 it turned up. Ed Bass met an architect, Phil Hawes, who was living at the ranch, and Hawes invited him to visit. Bass was then twenty-eight. During the next four years he visited the ranch frequently. He, too, got a new name: Boz. He describes Allen as having an important influence on his intellectual development. "John's a really interesting thinker. He has a remarkable ability to take a lot of disparate data and put it together in a very meaningful way. He's also a very talented engineer. I've benefited a lot from him."

Bass and Allen and other members of the group began collaborating on various projects around the world. Early on they established the Institute of Ecotechnics, a nonaccredited institution in London. Higher-ups within the group received degrees from there. Bass also acquired Les Marronniers, an eighteenth-century estate near Aix-en-Provence, which became an ecological-conference center and experimental farm.

In 1979, Bass returned to Fort Worth, where he bought a row of old storefronts along one side of Sundance Square, the main downtown plaza, and remodeled them into the Caravan of Dreams, an entertainment center that included a restaurant, a nightclub, and a theater that was to be the permanent home of the Theater of All Possibilities. But the Theater of All Possibilities and Fort Worth did not get along. Perhaps it was Allen's habit of chanting mantras while eating his lunch. Rumors about strange doings down at the Caravan began to travel around Fort Worth. Then, on Easter Sunday 1985, a sensational story appeared in the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

The front-page article suggested that John Allen exercised a sinister influence over Ed Bass. Much of the story (an expanded version of a report that had appeared the week before in *The Dallas Morning News*) was based on allegations made by Carol Line, a former employee at the Caravan of Dreams. She said she had seen Bass, stripped of his clothes, sitting on the floor while Allen hit, kicked, and berated him "because he could not cut himself loose from his —— credit cards, that he was still a —— capitalist."

Bass says that she made the story up.

GIL KENNY

"She embezzled some $20,000, which she was caught at," and so she struck back, he explains. A few months after the story ran, Line recanted, saying that she had not in fact seen Allen hitting Bass; then she repaid some of the money and the charges brought against her by the Caravan of Dreams were dropped. But now she has re-recanted and stands by her original version, which had Bass saying, "Those Bass brothers, I hate them all." Bass says, "I believe the story had me down on my knees saying, 'I hate those capitalists.' Ha. I'm a real Communist, aren't I? There was a lot of stuff that got stirred up and somehow took on a life of its own. This is another thing I've learned about the media. Once something appears in print it's subject to endless repetition." He says he has never seen Allen hit anyone: "I've never seen anything to indicate that John Allen wasn't a fairly decent guy."

Allen himself told *The Washington Post* in 1985 that, while he had occasionally struck one or another of the "upper-middle-class American diddleheads" in the group, he had never hit Bass, though he had occasionally yelled at him "when he was acting like a snotty Yale millionaire." Allen went on to say, "Ed Bass is a problem, you know, because he's deferred to all his life. Now this is very dangerous. So I have yelled, yes, I have yelled hard. But these [assholes] have never, I have never put anyone through, I would say, 25 percent of what I went through in basic training."

"Question: What happens if the biospherians don't get along? Answer: They get together, talk about it, and work out their problems."

Near the door of the Biosphere Café is John Allen himself. He is now sixty-two, with a leathery neck and big red hands, nodding vigorously over some point of conversation. He has indeed come a long way from the windswept ranch to this room at this moment, surrounded by the American scientific establishment. Who knows how far he can go? He has said that he'd like to die on Mars, and that he has a place for a house picked out—between a canyon three times deeper than the Grand Canyon and a mountain 89,000 feet high. "It's the most scenic place in the universe, as far as we now know it."

Bass makes his way through the crowd and shakes hands with Allen. The two men greet each other warmly, and chat briefly together. Then dinner is announced. Everyone moves into the dining room. Someone is heard to say that one of the entrées on the menu is tilapia fish, the same fish the biospherians eat inside Biosphere 2.

"Really?" says one of the scientists.

"And," the man continues, "it's the same fish that Christ's disciples fished for in the Sea of Galilee."

During dinner much of the discussion is about the media.

"I talked to that reporter from *The Washington Post* because you told me to and he didn't use anything I told him."

"Well, that's typical."

It is true that the reporting on Biosphere 2 has not been the media's finest hour. Much of the negative press has been based on the allegations of a man named Lou Hawthorne, a sometime filmmaker from San Francisco, who has been engaged in an unusual pas de deux with Biosphere 2's leaders. In news reports, Hawthorne has been inaccurately described as a former employee of Biosphere 2. Actually, he was hired by the head of the University of Phoenix, who happens to be his stepfather, to make an educational film about Biosphere 2 for a course in biospherics the university was offering. He was given $123,000 in cash and equipment to do it. Several months into his work, Hawthorne says, he realized that the project wasn't the scientific experiment he had supposed it to be, and so he decided to produce an exposé instead. This involved trying to find a camera he could wear in his belt buckle and other bits of skulduggery. When Biosphere 2 finally caught on to what Hawthorne was up to it requested that the university cancel the film, which the university did, and it demanded that he turn over his footage, which he refused to do. Biosphere 2 and the university have filed suit against Hawthorne, charging him with, among other things, theft, breach of contract, and violating trade-secrecy laws. Nowadays he spends his time organizing a Hawthorne Defense Fund, and making himself available to the media whenever they come to call, which is quite often. Lately, Hawthorne has appeared on *Now It Can Be Told* ("This is a major betrayal, a major violation of the public trust") and CBS news ("These people are really scary").

Some of those connected with Biosphere 2 are confident that, after Hawthorne and the three or four other people who are running down the project have had their say, all the allegations of fraud will dry up and the experiment will go forward as planned. Others feel that if the experiment is to work Ed Bass will have to replace the old Synergia Ranch group with some professional scientists and managers. The biggest problem, say several people close to Biosphere 2, is that John Allen and Margret Augustine are engaged in a power struggle and Allen is losing it. "John's thing is control," one person says. "He would like to control the world if he could. And the biosphere is the ultimate power trip for a person like that—a little world with eight people in it whom you control completely. But the problem is that John isn't completely in control. He has competition from Margret. It used to be John could tell Margret what to do—now it's the other way around. It's so sad. This beautiful world, built with love, plant by plant. What a waste for John and Margret to trash it. It's like Saturn eating his children."

Dinner is over. Ed Bass walks alone back up the hill to his room at the inn. Inside Biosphere 2, the ocean is illuminated by floodlights, causing the glass to shimmer. Perhaps, in the distant future, new biospherians will look back on these pioneers as we look back on the Pilgrims, and remember how they endured that terrible first winter, hungry, oppressed by crop failures, buffeted by the power struggles swirling around them.

The feeling among people who know Bass is that he is a terrifically loyal person and that he will stick by his old friends at Biosphere 2. Bass himself says he has complete confidence in Biosphere 2's management. "There's an old engineering maxim, 'Multifunctional devices are no damn good,' " he says. "In a sense B2 is a multifunctional device. It's scientific, it's educational, it's commercial. It's very difficult to manage. People say, 'Now, what in the world is this?' It doesn't behave exactly like a scientific project, and therefore it's open to criticism on that basis." □



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Leap of Faith

"I love when they say 'overnight star,' " laughs Broadway sensation Faith Prince. "I've been here for twelve years!" And yet as Miss Adelaide—the squeaky-voiced, psychosomatically sniffling wannabe wife of Nathan Detroit in the smash revival of *Guys and Dolls*—Prince has made such a vivid impression she seems like a revelation from out of the blue. As the "overnight" accolades pour in, the Virginia-born veteran wants it known that her dues have been paid in full. After years of Off Broadway work, she won a Tony nomination for *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, originated the role of the breakdown-laden wife in *Falsettoland*, and stole the ill-fated *Nick & Nora* in a delicious act of petty larceny. Now her phone's ringing off the hook and Prince beams, "I've worked a long time to have these kinds of problems!" —MICHAEL MUSTO

Photograph by DARRYL ESTRINE

Keene Sense



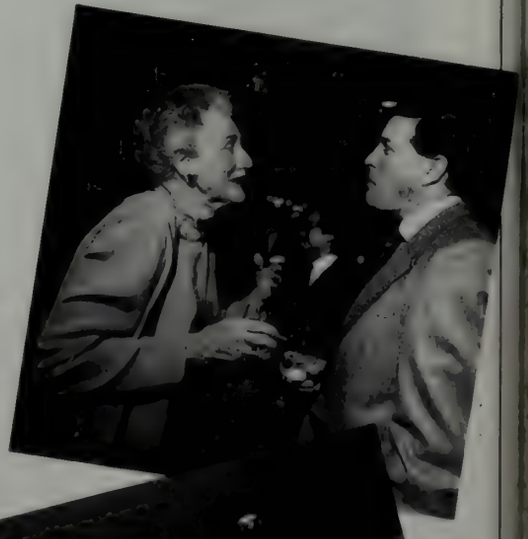
Lightning conductor: NYCO's Christopher Keene at Lincoln Center.

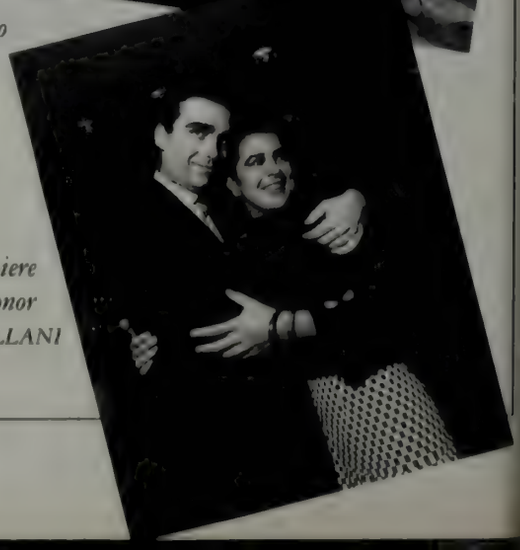
Conductor Christopher Keene doesn't play the dangerous business of opera safe. As general director of the New York City Opera since 1989, he has cut through what he calls "the Establishment marble" of Lincoln Center and opened it up to new musical horizons. Under Keene, NYCO has been venturing out to the far corners of twentieth-century music theater with a series of neglected modern masterpieces. In 1990, there was Schönberg's majestic *Moses und Aron,* followed in 1991 by Zimmermann's anti-war epic, *Die Soldaten;* for the season which starts on July 16, Keene's baton will lead the New York stage premiere of Busoni's weird and wonderful *Doktor Faust.*

A forty-five-year-old Californian with a dry wit and sharp tongue, the conductor describes himself as never happy unless he's juggling "fifteen balls in the air." Much more the master musician than the melodramatic maestro, Keene, with his radical tastes and phenomenal energies, is putting NYCO back on the artistic front line. —RUPERT CHRISTIANSEN

Heart Strings







Itzhak Perlman, Cho-Liang Lin, Midori, and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg are but a few of the greats who have been tutored by Dorothy DeLay, widely revered as the world's foremost violin instructor. Renowned for encouraging artistic individualism in her students' technique, DeLay, who teaches at New York's Juilliard School and consults at London's Royal College of Music, also doles out advice on everything from personal to business matters. "Sometimes," she says, "I'll be asked by my students to sit in on recording sessions, as if they consider me a good-luck charm, like a rabbit's foot." This month at the Aspen Music Festival, Cho-Liang Lin and another DeLay protégé, Robert McDuffie, will play the premiere performances of two violin concerti commissioned in honor of her seventy-fifth birthday. —JOHN VILLANI

Clockwise from above: *Dorothy DeLay celebrates her seventy-fifth birthday with Itzhak Perlman; Mrs. Avery Fisher and Juilliard president Joseph Polisi; Robert McDuffie and Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg.*

Photographs by JONATHAN BECKER

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Alberto Giacometti, *Nose/Le Nez*, 1947
Jawlensky, *Blue Mountain*, 1908-09

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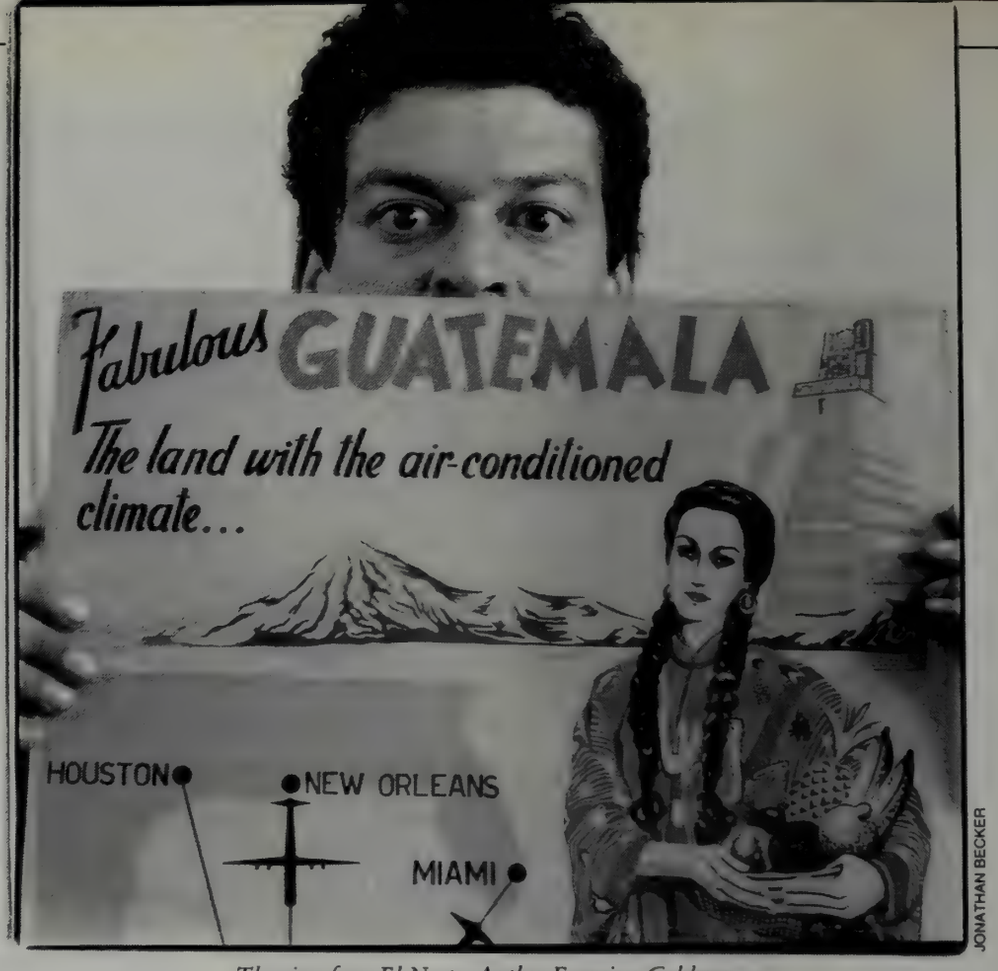
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Central American Casting



The view from El Norte: Author Francisco Goldman.

Francisco Goldman could have been one of those gilded Reagan-era fiction writers—young, slender, and media-savvy. A mere slip of a lad in the early eighties, he published a string of short stories that attracted the attention of Morgan Entrekin at Atlantic Monthly Press. They agreed Goldman should write a novel, but Goldman, who is Guatemalan-American, kept the project simmering while he focused on his acclaimed reporting from Central America. When he returned to the novel, he was older, wiser, and better informed. The result, *The Long Night of White Chickens*, concerns a partially autobiographical character named Roger Graetz. Roger discovers the brutality of America's allies in Guatemala when he travels there to investigate the murder of Flor, who had been sent to the States to be his family's maid but became much more. The novel, like Roger himself, stands between two worlds—in part a personal story of love and coming of age, it is also a grand historical assault in the tradition of Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene. Whether Goldman now turns to another fiction project or more journalism remains to be seen. At this report he is somewhere in the mountains of Guatemala, where the faxes don't buzz and the phones never ring.

Night-table Reading



Hanif Kureishi *(writer, director):* Odd Jobs, *by John Updike (Knopf). "Fortunately, Updike is that rare thing, an essayist rather than a reviewer, and the range and quality of these essays are endlessly interesting."*

Maryann Plunkett *(actress):* Silences, *by Tillie Olsen (Delacorte). "When I'm traveling, I must have this battered and dog-eared book with me. It's about creativity, and the creativity of living."*





Joanna Kerns *(actress):* A River Runs Through It, *by Norman Maclean (University of Chicago). "This novella expresses poignantly the things we cannot say to the family we love and later wish we had, the emotions that sit there and smolder unsaid."*

Robert MacNeil *(broadcast journalist):* His Master's Voice, *by Robert Kotlowitz (Knopf). "It is a delicately humorous and sensual evocation of Jewish life in Baltimore at the outbreak of World War II."*



ILLUSTRATION BY TIM SHEAFFER



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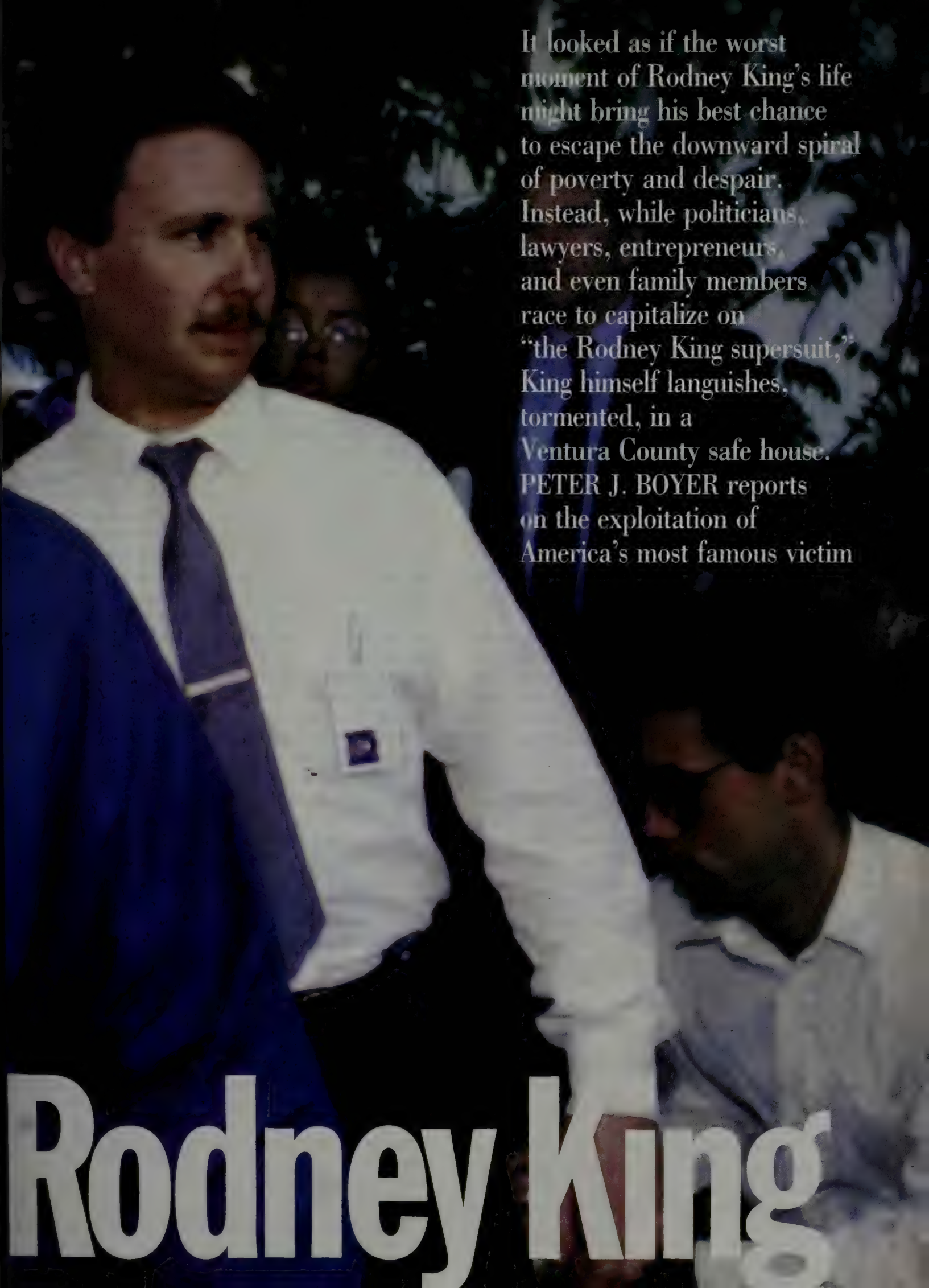
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KING FOR A DAY
On May 1, in a rare public appearance, Rodney King, with his lawyer, Steven Lerman, left, made a plea for peace in Los Angeles.

The Selling of



Rodney King

It looked as if the worst moment of Rodney King's life might bring his best chance to escape the downward spiral of poverty and despair. Instead, while politicians, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and even family members race to capitalize on "the Rodney King supersuit," King himself languishes, tormented, in a Ventura County safe house. PETER J. BOYER reports on the exploitation of America's most famous victim

King has told people he's miserable in his

It was a good day, a full and prosperous day, in the Rodney King trade. Across Los Angeles, the politicians, the preachers, the journalists, the Hollywood compassion-and-healing crowd, the lawyers, the agitators, the T-shirt peddlers, the con artists and charlatans, all rose early and stayed late. They worked the charred and empty corners of the town, and they worked the gleaming, moneyed, undisturbed corners too, seeking photo ops, easy money, production deals, a new angle, an audience, a sanctimony fix, and finding an abundant yield.

Angela King, Rodney's aunt, was up at four that morning, ten days after the explosive not-guilty verdict for the cops who'd beaten her dead brother's son. A local politician sent a car to Angela's home, behind a storefront in the starkly delineated black section of Pasadena, to chauffeur her through a busy schedule. She was in a TV studio at five A.M., then moved on to a Baptist church in South-Central, where she met George and Barbara Bush, and from there went to a drug rehab center for young women, where she gave a little talk—Aunt Angela is wanted for public appearances now.

The president and his wife had gotten up early, too, leaving the Bonaventure Hotel downtown for a tour of the devastation, along the way passing hawkers of bootleg Rodney King T-shirts, and swindlers working cons in the first flush of the rebuilding effort. Bush showed that his speechwriters, at least, had heart—"To truly help, we must understand the agony of the depressed," he told the South-Central church crowd, and "You can't solve the problem if you don't feel its heartbeat." For those law-and-order voters, his thirty-one-car motorcade stopped at an L.A.P.D. station, where he sympathized with the cops: "It's not easy times." Bush's newly rediscovered urban-policy man, Jack Kemp, was invited along for the ride.

Across town, in Studio City, Pat Buchanan told a prayer breakfast that the rioters were not motivated by deprivation or a sense of injustice but were the products of misguided liberal policy, including public education. "They came out of schools where God, the Ten Commandments, and moral instruction have been expelled," Buchanan said, "and sex education, 'values clarification,' and condoms have been put in." Hillary Clinton, meanwhile, was out in Orange County talking about the rioting with high-school students.

Over in his law office at the edge of Beverly Hills, Steven Lerman told a Spanish television network that he was much too busy to fly to Madrid for an appearance. Lerman, a longtime "P.I." (personal injury) specialist, was preparing Rodney King's civil-rights suit against the city of Los Angeles, seeking $56 million—$1 million for each blow—or $83 million, or maybe $94 million, depending on which estimate you took on which day. A receptionist told at least one prospective client that Lerman's office wasn't taking any new cases, because it was fully occupied with "the Rodney King supersuit."

In the San Fernando Valley, attorney James F. Jordan awaited a callback from a production company that had expressed interest in buying the movie rights to his client's story—his client being the thirty-two-year-old plumbing-company manager who had taped the King beating to try out his new Sony Handycam. "Not even the Zapruder film is as important as this," Jordan said by way of explaining why he had also asked for roughly $9 million from the television stations across the country that have already used the famous footage. Jordan said that his client deserves his share of the financial activity the tape has created. "You know, this is America. If you've got a gold thimble in a haystack and you find it, God bless you if you can take it and make a dollar with it. Because that's what this country is all about."

Down the 405 Freeway in Orange County, attorney James Banks was also awaiting a call that he hoped would open a movie negotiation. Banks represents a fledgling entertainment company—of which he is also a vice president—that quietly scored a coup when, two months after the beating, it bought the rights to Rodney King's name—"coffee mugs, T-shirts, you name it." Banks said his company is at work on a movie, books, and a mini-series, and is weighing its merchandising options. "*Big*," he said with a bit of a snort. "I don't know if that is a big enough word for the Rodney King thing."

The company, virtually unknown in Hollywood, a town that loves to know everything, is called Triple-7—as in hitting the jackpot.

By day's end, a glittery crowd had assembled in Century City for a solidarity march. Carrying placards calling for "justice," they were led by Anjelica Huston and her soon-to-be husband, Bob Graham, to Beverly Hills, where Huston, wearing cowboy boots and a denim jacket, gave a passionate speech, calling for the healing of the city's and society's wounds. Several marchers thought that Huston showed promise as a celebrity advocate, possibly another Vanessa Redgrave, or at least another Jane Fonda.

And Rodney King? He was everywhere that day—on the lips of the pols, on the backs of the T-shirts—and he was nowhere. He was not in Los Angeles, nor had he been there much lately. He was shut away in a safe house in (of all places) Ventura County, wrapped in the arms of psychopharmaceuticals, and under the twenty-four-hour watch of a private-security team led by (of all people) a former L.A.P.D. cop.

The guards work in shifts so that King is never alone, not even for an evening stroll around the block with his wife, Crystal. When he goes anywhere, even to the barbershop, he is driven by a member of the team—but then, there's really no place to go in the county where a mostly white jury acquitted the cops who beat him. And so, says Aunt Angela, "he watches TV."

This secret life has been constructed for King by Steven Lerman. Tormented by recurring nightmares of the beating, King is convinced, with the help of his attorney, that he'll come to harm—or worse—if he ventures outside the cocoon. Inside, with a cellular phone and an endless stream of rented

cloistered life. "He's just kind of jittery."

videos Lerman has provided, Rodney King is living a strange, and completely American, paradox. The most hellish moment of his life has presented him, through no initiative of his own, with greater prospects than he'd ever imagined possible, and from which he is almost completely excluded.

His words make the cover of *Time* magazine, his name is attached to the rising—or crashing—careers of the sort of people he'd never be in the same room with, he gets private messages of sympathy from the president of the United States. Lawyers, agents, filmmakers have hustled to get a piece of him. The onslaught has provoked his family to bickering over merchandising and story rights. And now he couldn't help them if he wanted to, because someone else owns his name.

Rodney King has become a mythic symbol of denied justice, with much commerce and national debate and a riot being conducted in his name, but he can't sleep at night, or go home to the 'hood for some beers and a barbecue.

To say that Lerman has put a tight rein on Rodney King does not begin to describe the control he exerts over his famous client. "Svengali" is a word that arises more than once. Lerman hired Tom Owens, the former L.A.P.D. officer, to supervise a security force which ensures that his "operation" is not penetrated, as well as a psychiatrist to monitor King's psyche and administer antidepressants and other medications.

"I just want to be a normal family again, and peaceful, like we used to do," says Aunt Angela. "Where does he go in Ventura? Nowhere. Every time I call, he's at home. . . . They've increased his medicine because of this incident right now [the acquittal and the riots]. He was to where he was Rodney again—lively and just outgoing. . . . Now he's back on that medicine. And way out there. You gotta go across three freeways to get to him."

"The way Lerman's got Rodney," says one colleague of Lerman's, "is sort of like when Patty Hearst joined the Symbionese Liberation Army."

Rodney King spent more than a year sprawled on that L.A. street, hunched against the blows of the police batons, as that videotape replayed itself on an endless loop in American living rooms, searing that image deep into the American eye. In a way, the eighty-one-second tape erased King's life before and after the beating. It was all we knew, and, it seemed, all we needed to know: he was the national definition of victim. Then came the acquittal and the rioting and King's halting, affecting plea for peace. The image expanded: he became an emblematic figure. *Time* longed for national leaders who could be so eloquent; a New York columnist equated him with Rosa Parks, the brave mother of the modern civil-rights movement, who refused to sit in the back of an Alabama bus. Others have placed him on a par with Martin Luther King Jr.

But Rodney King is not Rosa Parks, he is not Martin Luther King Jr., and, for that matter, he is not even Rodney King. He's always been known as "Glen," his middle name, and the fact that he became "Rodney" after the event summarizes the transformation imposed upon him by that videotape. He had a life before those eighty-one seconds—a life at least as revealing of the nature of our separating society as the hollow debate over which failed policies should be blamed for "the rage of the urban underclass," as the handwringers like to call the burning down of cities. It is a life in some ways more difficult to confront than the brutality on that tape.

Rodney Glen King was born in Sacramento in 1965, the year that Los Angeles was last inflamed, to a family that fell somewhere in the middle of the black American spectrum—not quite middle-class, but a toehold above the hopeless poor. As Aunt Angela tells the family history, his father, Ronald King, was from Kentucky, the son of an air-force sergeant who was often absent and a mother who left Ronald and Angela when they were toddlers. When she eventually came back for them, she'd had two other children by another man, and Ronald and Angela were each assigned one of their infant sisters to help raise.

They landed in Sacramento, where Ronald went to high school. Then he married Angela's best friend, Odessa, and the three of them moved south to Pasadena. Ronald was a sometime construction worker, but there weren't many jobs, and he drank, and so he mostly settled for daywork as a maintenance man. Odessa and he had a baby, Ronald junior, and then Rodney Glen, and kept going until they had five children.

It was a rough life. "They didn't have enough food," says Angela. "I was a nurse's aide, and then I had this little lady—I was taking care of her kids, like a nanny—over in Glendale. And Ronnie, he didn't want me to know, but I'd go over there to visit, and they didn't have no food, and their kids were walking around with T-shirts for diapers." Angela moved in with her brother and sister-in-law, putting her rent money into the household, but the life-style remained borderline at best. As Glen and his brothers and sister grew, their father drank more heavily; their mother sought solace in the Jehovah's Witnesses church.

There was love in the family, but trouble too, enough to smother hope. Ronald King sank deeper into alcoholism, and died at forty-two. Angela says one of their sisters moved in with a man who beat her, requiring Glen's regular intervention. Another sister, Juanita, simply vanished one day and hasn't been heard from since; Angela thinks she may have died with Jim Jones at Jonestown. Glen's younger brother Juan got caught up in the beating of a policeman and spent

more than a year behind bars. "He never even went to court on it—he went to jail," says Angela. "I feel terrible. We couldn't afford a lawyer."

By the time Glen got to high school, he was a big, handsome boy, six feet three inches and nearly two hundred pounds, but his future would not be made in school. He was only marginally literate, and was held back a year and placed in special-education classes. He dropped out in 1984, just months before graduation. His prospects for advancing beyond the life his father had known were dim, and grew dimmer when he and his girlfriend, Dennetta, had a baby. Now there was pressure to bring in money, but most of the jobs open to him were low-paying and unsteady. He and Dennetta separated, he had a second child with another woman, and the pressures grew.

He worked when he could, and he hung out, drinking "eightballs"—forty-ounce bottles of Olde English 800, the beverage of choice in his neighborhood. He avoided trouble, or serious trouble, anyway—he was picked up on a vice bust in Pasadena but was later released. Then he got married to a neighborhood girl named Crystal Waters, who had two children of her own. He was not exactly prepared to head up a household, and shortly thereafter he slipped beyond the edge.

One day in late 1989, needing money, King stuffed a two-foot-long tire iron under his jacket and walked into the 99 Market in Monterey Park to get it. He bought a pack of gum, then pulled out the tire iron and ordered the Korean store owner, Tae Suck Baik, to "open the cash register."

Baik complied, and King stuffed the cash into his pockets. Then, looking in the cash register, he reached for some checks, and the grocer struck him. King dropped the tire iron and tried to flee. When Baik pursued him, he picked up a metal rod and struck the grocer with it before hopping into his white Hyundai and driving off with a take of about $200.

King was quickly caught, pleaded guilty to second-degree robbery, and was sentenced to a two-year term at the California Correctional Center in Susanville. After several months in jail, he wrote a letter to the court asking for early release:

"I have all good time work time. I have seriously been thinking about what happen and I think if it is possible that you can give me another chance, your honor. I have a good job and I have two fine kid who wish me home. Have so much at stake to lose if I don't get that chance. My job and family awaits me. So please reconsider your judgement, your honor. The sky my witness and God knows."

The judge did not release King, but he was paroled in December 1990, after serving one year. He went home, and, less employable than ever, was unable to find work in construction. He took a part-time job as a laborer at Dodger Stadium and spent a lot of time hanging out with his neighborhood friends, such as Bryant Allen, known as Pooh. They had been friends since they were teenagers, and in a way they were even related: Pooh's sister had had a child by King's older brother, Ronald. And they were together on that night, March 2, when everything changed.

They had just been hanging out with a friend of Pooh's, Freddie Helms ("Freddie G."), nothing much to do, when King suggested they take a ride in his car. Pooh didn't know where they were going, but he later recollected that Glen had said something about driving to Hansen Dam, up the 210 Freeway, where they could hang out and maybe meet some girls. It was a bit late for that, past midnight, but Pooh and Freddie G. were game, and off they went. They'd been drinking that night, and had an eightball in the car with them when King saw the flashing lights of a California Highway Patrol car in his rearview mirror.

King panicked and tried to get away, leading the CHiP car, driven by a husband-and-wife team, on a chase at speeds originally reported to have reached 115 m.p.h. but later revised downward. King got off the freeway in a community called Lake View Terrace, where he finally pulled over. "When police pull you over, man...you always kind of, your heart start jumping a little bit, you know, boom, boom," King later told investigators from the district attorney's office. He said he thought, "[I] hope they don't beat my ass with anything. That thought always go through everybody's mind."

Summoned by an A.P.B. at 12:47 A.M., the L.A.P.D. officers had arrived on the scene. They told the Highway Patrol team that they'd handle things from there.

George Holliday was awakened from a sound sleep by the loud *thwap-thwap-thwap-thwap* of a police helicopter churning right outside his apartment window. He got up, put on his pants, and went to the balcony of his second-floor apartment to see what the commotion was about. When he saw all the cops, and the scene bathed in light, he immediately realized he had the perfect occasion to try out his brand-new Sony Handycam. He started taping.

When it was over, Holliday put his camera away and went back to bed, not fully realizing what he had recorded. It wasn't until late the next afternoon, a Sunday, that he thought to view the tape he'd taken the night before. Stunned by what he saw, he called the local L.A.P.D. station and asked what had gone down. They wouldn't say. He then called CNN, but no one answered at the L.A. bureau. Finally, he called KTLA, Channel 5, where he was told they'd take a look at the tape. It was broadcast on the ten o'clock news that night.

By the next morning, outrage was felt throughout the city, and among those most determined to obtain justice for the motorist in the video were the lawyers of Los Angeles. It was the case of a lifetime.

It seemed likely to go to one of a group known informally as "the brutality bar"—lawyers who, because of the L.A.P.D.'s disproportionately large share of brutality claims, have made civil-rights-abuse cases the focus of their practices. Known as "the True Believers" by the city attorneys whose task it is to defend cops, these lawyers have their own referral service, Police Watch, which is well known in communities with frequent L.A.P.D. abuse complaints.

"All of a sudden, here's this *(Continued on page 158)*

"It was just a circus. Everybody was trying to get a piece of Rodney."



THE FIRE THIS TIME
A devastated section of Los Angeles on the day King made his speech.



ALEXANDER LIBERMAN

THE CREATION

Dietrich in 1930, the year *The Blue Angel* was released, with Josef von Sternberg, who made her a star and said, "I am Miss Dietrich. Miss Dietrich is me." *Opposite*, Dietrich in 1961.



Earth Angel

She claimed to be bored by her illustrious past, but Marlene Dietrich was really the greatest keeper of her own flame. STEVEN BACH spoke with Dietrich extensively in the last years of her life, and in this extract from his upcoming biography he reports how her brilliantly daring mystique endured, even where lovers and mentors did not

"It's Marlene," she would say, when I picked up the phone, in that voice Hemingway said could break your heart. It was 1986, and the heartbreaker as she edged toward ninety was that it had become as brittle as parchment. But you could still hear the technique. She was still an actress, still made that little dip in the second syllable ("It's Mar-*lay*-na") that had made knees weak for half a century.

Ill and old, a proud recluse, she had only the telephone to connect her to the world from her bedroom on Paris's Avenue Montaigne, just across from the Hôtel Plaza Athénée. She was determined to remain ageless, guarded from photographers and biographers who might try to plunder or diminish Dietrich's Dietrich. She knew I was writing a biography of her and was therefore a danger; she gave me the time of day only because I had known Josef von Sternberg, who had catapulted her to world fame. She also knew I could help her with some business.

She wanted to sell her famous stage costumes, those confections of stardust-and-nothing which had knocked eyes out from Las Vegas to Moscow to Tokyo all through the fifties and sixties, right up to the fateful fall in Australia in 1975, when her body broke apart onstage and ended the greatest of her careers.

She had read *Final Cut,* a book I had written about some broken bones of my own, sustained in the movie business, and she called to say she liked it, adding, "You got the editing part wrong." She explained, "It's all, all, *all* in the editing!"—as good a definition of the Dietrich legend as I had ever heard. "And the angles," she continued with a chuckle. "There's always an angle. What's yours? What's an American doing living in Germany anyway? Germans have no sense of humor."

"You do," I answered.

"I'm not a German!" she boomed. "I'm a Berliner!"

She still had the Berlin sense of humor and the Berliner's vital concern about the world and what its view of her might be. Selling her costumes for ready cash didn't go with the legend, and she had a horror of pity, but she was broke. Her Belgian landlords had repeatedly and publicly tried to evict her, but the French know a thing or two about public monuments and had picked up the rent for this *Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur.* When I offered the famous "diamond-studded gown" and swansdown coat (hand-mended by her) to the Metropolitan in New York, she was appalled, fearing someone might think of her as a "museum piece." That was better, though, than putting them on the block at Christie's or Sotheby's, who printed catalogues. Her jewels were one thing (some went up for auction in 1987), but she didn't want "my old clothes," as she called the costumes, to be treated like dirty laundry.

I finally found a buyer willing to pay $25,000 for the dress and coat she and Jean Louis had invented together, and she never asked who bought them. I was just as glad, because I wasn't sure how thrilled she'd have been to learn they had been purchased by the German Film Foundation in Berlin with money provided by the Berlin Senate. It was a first gesture of the reconciliation that is only now—now that it's too late—taking place. Lili Marlene's entertaining Allied troops as they defeated the Nazis would never quite be forgiven. She forgave them for not forgiving her, in the end, by asking to be buried in Berlin, next to her mother.

"I am ready to sell my soul for money!" Dietrich told me when I agreed to help her. The money didn't go to her directly, but into a joint account in a New York bank, an account hard for her to draw on from the bed she could leave only with the aid of a walker or a wheelchair. When I asked her if there were other items I could help her sell, she exploded. "I am *astonished* that you think—you who know the business—that I would have here in Paris or in my home in New York any 'memorabilia' from my films. Do you really think that I schlepp around with me props and things I stole from Paramount? Anything used in my films was conscientiously returned at the end of each day!"

She never admitted that she couldn't walk, that she couldn't do what she liked to call "the Dietrich strut" anymore. Anything less than perfect health didn't go with the legend. Or with those legs. A very Dietrich-sounding maid often answered the telephone in a funny accent and explained, "Miss Dietrich is lunching at Versailles," or "Miss Dietrich is driving to Zurich," or "Miss Dietrich is on a plane to Tokyo."

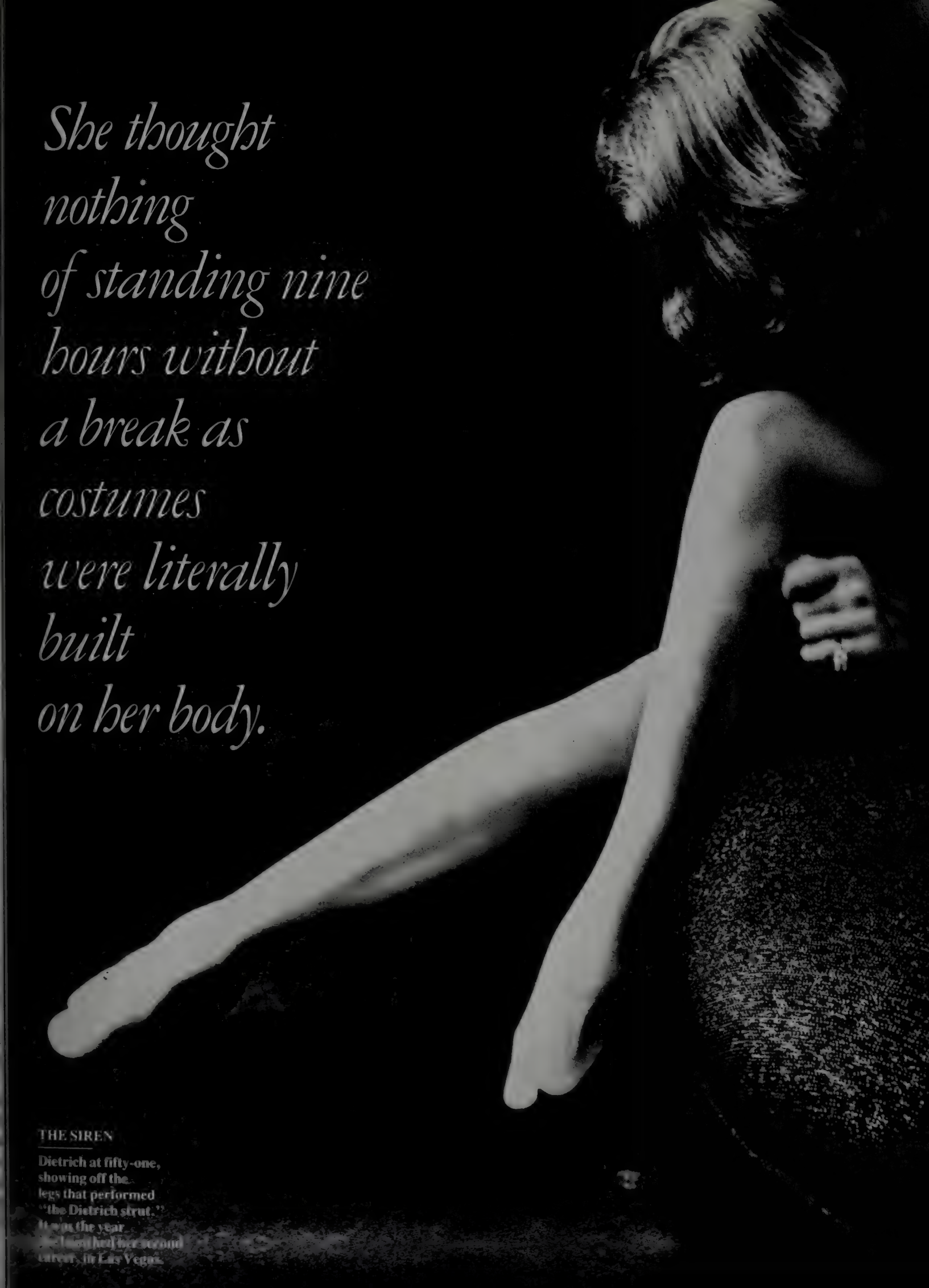
One day she confided to me how she outwitted the nosy world by only pretending to be a recluse. "I keep my car in the garage of this building," she said, forgetting she had never learned to drive. "The elevator takes me directly to the garage, and I get in my car and drive to the airport in sunglasses with a scarf around my head. That's why photographers who hang around the building never see me. Do they think I go in and out the front door? When I know they're *waiting?* I'm not meshuga!"

We agreed that I would come to Paris to pick up the costumes. On the appointed day, I checked into the Plaza Athénée, sent over some flowers, and called. "Miss Dietrich," I was informed, "is lunching at Versailles."

The next day, when I was back home in Munich, a thousand miles from her, she called. "It's Marlene, schweetheart," she said with the familiar lisp. She scolded me about the flowers. "They die and drop petals on the piano, and then I have to dust. Besides, I don't want you spending money on me. I hate waste." Hausfrau Marlene, thinking of economies. She used international telephone as her personal wire service, and also sent notes, invariably printed in inch-high letters with red or green ink. An inveterate reader, she had friends in Tarzana, California, buy glasses for her at the corner drugstore that her Paris doctor wouldn't prescribe over the phone anymore.

Reading was vital—newspapers, magazines, books. She wanted to know what was going on in the world. She called me one night in 1987 and said, "I have nobody of intelligence to talk to. That's why I'm calling. I want to talk about Chernobyl." The French trial of Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie, "the Butcher of Lyons," the same year outraged her, because the French seemed not to care. She was incensed that her secretary, a Jewish woman from Chicago named Norma, didn't seem interested. She railed at the same time she wished she could forget. "I shouldn't let it

She thought nothing of standing nine hours without a break as costumes were literally built on her body.



THE SIREN

Dietrich at fifty-one, showing off the legs that performed "the Dietrich strut." It was the year she launched her second career in Las Vegas.


"Women are better," she would say.
"But you can't live with a woman."



THE ANDROGYNE

Dietrich the cross-dresser, in 1953, as ringmaster of a charity gala with Ringling Bros., and, *opposite*, in Paris circa 1932 with her husband, Rudi Sieber, far left.

When six-and-a-half-year-old Maria arrived



ALEXANDER LIBERMAN

in Hollywood, Marlene announced she was four.



THE MOTHER

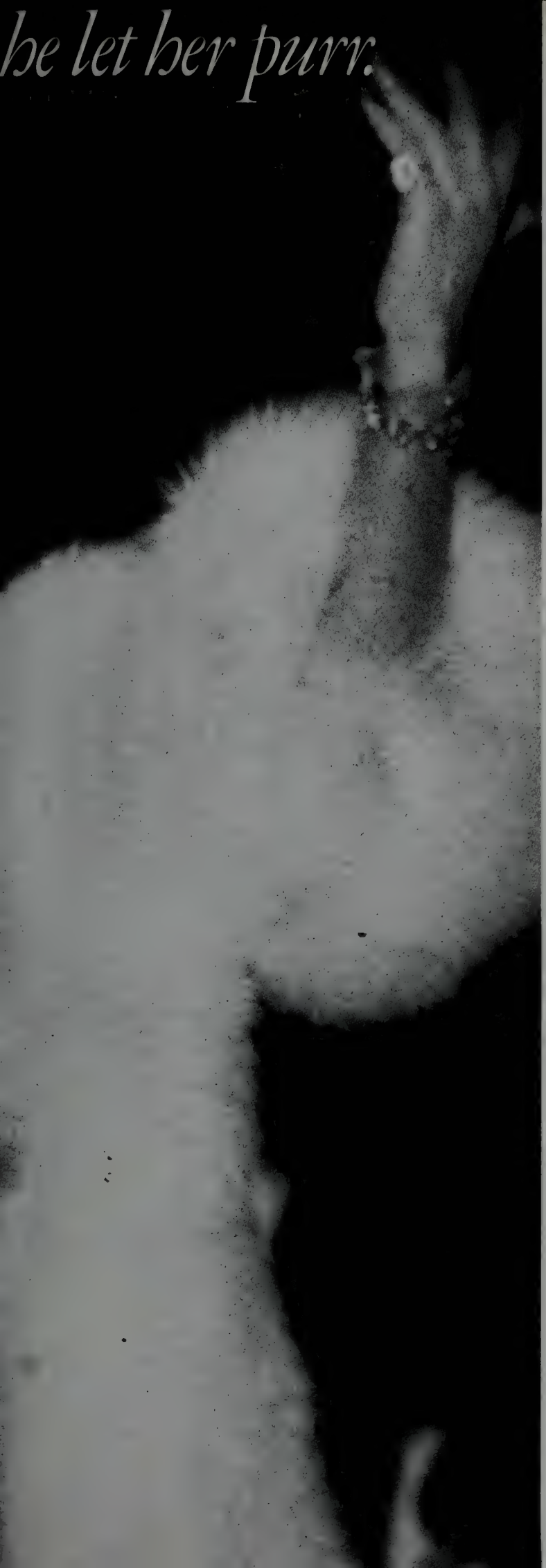
Marlene Dietrich and her daughter, Maria Riva, in the mid-fifties. "Marlene swamped Maria with love," said Douglas Fairbanks Jr.

Bacharach let her croon, he let her belt,



THE LEGEND

Dietrich onstage in the early sixties, when she was acknowledged as the greatest solo turn in the world.



eat me up like this,'' she sighed, but forgetting was hard for the woman who had turned down Hitler and his cronies. ''I went through Belsen,'' she told me, ''and I saw it all. The smoke was still rising from the chimneys. How can they forget Auschwitz?''

She called Nazi-hunter Beate Klarsfeld to discuss the Barbie case, and brooded that her Jewish secretary sensed no irony that Rudolf Hess, the *Führer*'s deputy, was then seemingly as fit as a fiddle as the sole prisoner in Spandau. ''I met him once,'' she told me. ''He was the least—how do we say that?—*coupable,* because the most crazy.'' She decided ''they must have the best food and medical care in the *world* at Spandau,'' and asked Klarsfeld facetiously what you had to do to get a room there. ''Kill a Jew,'' said Klarsfeld. ''Oh, *Norma!*'' Dietrich called out.

She chose to forget I was writing about her. She had written her own memoirs, a small masterwork of evasion that so angered British critic Gilbert Adair that he titled his review ''Witness for the Prosecution.'' She had written it in English, but it went through German and French before it traveled *back* into English from someone who never saw the original (I did: it was better than anything that ever got printed). When it was published in America, Stephen Harvey of the Museum of Modern Art reviewed it for *The New York Times*. Dietrich wrote to tell him she had written it in German, she had no *idea* it was being published in English, and he had gotten it all wrong anyway.

She knew I was traveling to Paris, London, Berlin, Prague, Brussels, Copenhagen, Vienna, Moscow—anywhere there were prints of those films she ''never ever made'' before *The Blue Angel*. She seemed not to care, but always managed to track me down by telephone wherever I was. She still claimed she had been ''a student in a theater school'' when Josef von Sternberg came to Berlin to make the movie that would make her famous forever, and none of those old nitrate prints I was watching on rusty moviolas or in dank Iron Curtain archives existed for her, so she pretended they didn't exist for me.

But they did, and I saw them, and what I would like to have told her before she died on May 6 was that the legend had maybe edited out too much. The more I realized the cost of building the legend and maintaining it, the more I believed the life made the legend bigger, not smaller—made the woman more than just a myth.

She had always insisted on keeping private and public lives distinct and separate. It wasn't so much that they were different; they often weren't, but insisting they *were* was her way of surviving Dietrich. The film roles were yesterday's news about today's woman. They reduced her to a few hours of shadows. Dietrich's Dietrich was always *now*—present tense—not reducible to anything; it had already been pared away to its essence.

I mistakenly thought that time had passed her by in reclusion, that her loyalty to her own image had made her out-of-date. Then she told me that Madonna wanted to remake *The Blue Angel* and was asking for a personal interview in Paris. ''I *acted* the vulgarity,'' she trumpeted. ''Madonna *is* vulgar!'' I was so surprised by the outburst that I asked whom, if anyone, *(Continued on page 152)*

WILD ABOUT PERRY

As the bad-boy heartthrob of *Beverly Hills, 90210*, Luke Perry, with Jason Priestley, helped catapult the Fox network into the highest teen ratings. This month, he appears on the big screen in *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer.* Is Perry just this year's model—or is he the future of Hollywood? KEVIN SESSUMS reports

Photographs by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ





WHERE THE BOYS ARE

Luke Perry and Jason Priestley with fans. *90210* draws up to 69 percent of female teenage viewers.

The Museum of Television & Radio chose the show's "condom distribution" episode to be included in its permanent collection.

Luke Perry, whose character Dylan McKay takes his Porsche out for a testosterone drive Thursday nights on *Beverly Hills, 90210,* has become a touchstone for the American public: he's Everyteen, a youngster who, growing up quite cognizant of the frightening age in which he lives—AIDS, drugs, family, and now urban, violence—retains not only a cool resolve but also a cooler integrity. He does all the wrong things for all the right reasons.

I had arranged to meet Perry by the pool at the Regent Beverly Wilshire hotel on what turned out to be the first full day of the recent riots in Los Angeles, and the incongruity of the situation was inescapable. *Beverly Hills, 90210* has codified a kind of Caucasian chic for the 1990s, and here he was, in a backward baseball cap, lunching under an umbrella, while smoke drifted overhead from the fires that had erupted the night before. Japanese teenagers were frolicking around us in chlorined serenity as Perry squinted up at the darkening sky. "So what are the ground rules here?" he asked.

"There aren't any. You can trust me."

"Yeah. Right."

"How old are you?"

"A woman from *Rolling Stone* asked me that once, and I said, 'I'll tell you, but then I'll have to kill you.' " A Japanese teenager squealed as her boyfriend threw her in the pool. "I'm twenty-five."

Though Perry, an Ohio farm boy, convincingly portrays a rather jaded junior Beverly Hills denizen in *90210,* in person he seems ill at ease in these surroundings. He wanted to talk about what was going on down in South-Central L.A. and how on some absurd level it connected to the extreme popularity of his show. "I think society has become oppressive in a lot of ways, and we're a good outlet for all of that. I mean, that shit downtown is a perfect example. There are a lot of pent-up frustrations down there. This ain't all about one thing: Rodney King. It's symbolic: we're living in a society that's getting out of control. I don't think it is a race issue—on some level certainly it is, but I saw white people down there screaming last night. I saw Hispanics. I saw Asians. I saw blacks. There were gays. There were straights. If nothing else, I see some beauty in what's happening. You've got people you would ordinarily never see together. It inspired a passion in them. . . . It's unfortunate that it had to be something bad like that, but I think there's a little bit of good in that, too," he theorized. "Look, we've just come out of the just-say-no phase. Say no to everything. It's too bad that they didn't limit that to just drugs. They wanted people to say no to everything fun. Well, on *Beverly Hills, 90210* we're saying, Just say maybe." He gave it all a shrug, and looked right at me. "You know, *Just say maybe.*"

Fox Inc.'s ex-chairman, Barry Diller, who founded the Fox network and grew up in Beverly Hills himself, had harbored for some time the concept of a television show set in an idealized version of Beverly Hills High School. Diller and the president of the Fox Entertainment Group, Peter Chernin, teamed up then twenty-eight-year-old screenwriter Darren Star and veteran producer Aaron Spelling to create the show's pilot, about the Walshes, a Minnesota family (accountant father, empathic mother, sexy teenage fraternal twins Brenda and Brandon) that moves to this enclave, where bank accounts are as vulgarly displayed as cleavage. Later, to ensure a politically correct point of view, they brought in *Northern Exposure*'s supervising producer, writer Charles Rosin. The rest is teen-angst history.

The show has become more than a hit series; it is a social phenomenon of worldwide proportions. The cast of characters—which includes Spelling's daughter, Tori, as Donna, Shannen Doherty as Brenda, Ian Ziering as Steve, Gabrielle Carteris as Andrea, Brian Austin Green as David, Jennie Garth as Kelly, and Jason Priestley as Brandon—has formed into a cluster of fame with the following of a championship sports team. "As an actor on a show that has become successful, you try not to associate the word 'phenomenon' with what you're doing. That's a label the media has placed on our show," says Priestley, who is the neo-nice-guy hunk in the cast. "When *Cheers* went to number one, it wasn't a phenomenon; it was just a good show. We've been attacked with this stigma. As actors, that can be so detrimental to your career."

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The series is now seen in almost twenty countries, and is nearly as popular in Great Britain and Australia as it is here. The first fan letters from Russia—sixty-four of them—recently arrived, asking *90210*'s creators, "How did you know us so well?" In Spain a few months ago, two of the lesser-known characters made front-page news upon their arrival at the Madrid airport; reporters compared the hysteria that resulted to the Beatles' first visit three decades ago. Yet it is in America that the *90210* *(Continued on page 149)*



BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

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The Museum of Television & Radio chose the show's "condom distribution" episode to be included in its permanent collection.

Luke Perry, whose character Dylan McKay takes his Porsche out for a testosterone drive Thursday nights on *Beverly Hills, 90210,* has become a touchstone for the American public: he's Everyteen, a youngster who, growing up quite cognizant of the frightening age in which he lives—AIDS, drugs, family, and now urban, violence—retains not only a cool resolve but also a cooler integrity. He does all the wrong things for all the right reasons.

I had arranged to meet Perry by the pool at the Regent Beverly Wilshire hotel on what turned out to be the first full day of the recent riots in Los Angeles, and the incongruity of the situation was inescapable. *Beverly Hills, 90210* has codified a kind of Caucasian chic for the 1990s, and here he was, in a backward baseball cap, lunching under an umbrella, while smoke drifted overhead from the fires that had erupted the night before. Japanese teenagers were frolicking around us in chlorined serenity as Perry squinted up at the darkening sky. "So what are the ground rules here?" he asked.

"There aren't any. You can trust me."

"Yeah. Right."

"How old are you?"

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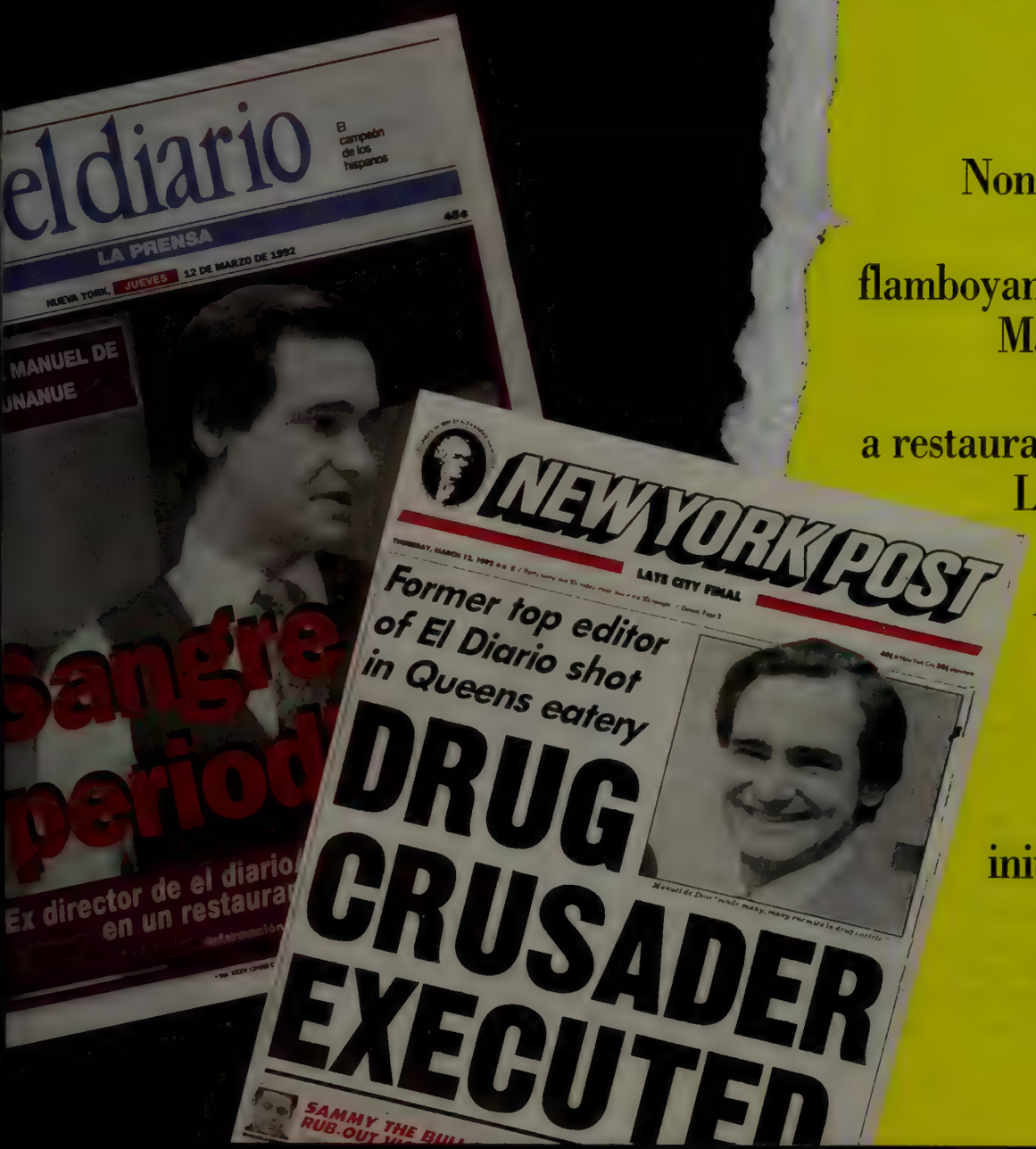
BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

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¿PERIODISTA SUPREMO?
De Dios in his office at *El Diario–La Prensa*, New York's largest Spanish-language daily, June 1989, and headlines after his March 11, 1992, murder. "It would be good for circulation," he once said, "if a reporter got killed."

Chronicle of a Death Foretold



None of his colleagues was surprised when the flamboyant crusading journalist Manuel de Dios Unanue was gunned down in a restaurant in New York City's Little Colombia. But as LESLIE and ANDREW COCKBURN report from Queens, Cali, and San Juan, the Colombian drug lords who were initially assumed to have ordered the hit may have been the least of de Dios's enemies

Patrons pay for drinks with hundred-dollar bills at Meson Asturias, sampling tapas while Spanish-language television blares from the set behind the bar. Pepe Aguera, the proprietor, snaps the bills like a croupier and holds them up to the light. It is a scene Manuel de Dios Unanue witnessed on countless nights—including his last, March 11, when at 9:15 P.M. two shots fired at close range from behind knocked him off his barstool. The forty-nine-year-old journalist, with his striking, lean frame and austere features, fell back onto the floor with two bullet holes in his skull.

The sight of de Dios lying dead in his neat gray suit did not surprise Pepe Aguera or anyone else in this Queens, New York, neighborhood. Thirty years ago Meson Asturias, in the Elmhurst section of Queens, was an Irish bar, but the Irish have retreated west to Woodside. In the past twenty years this area—parts of Elmhurst, Jackson Heights, and Corona—has become Little Colombia. A congested strip along Roosevelt Avenue beneath the roar of the No. 7 El train, it is sandwiched between the expanding Asians and the old established Italians. The Delgado and Costamar travel agencies sell cut-rate seats on Avianca flights. Some of the better salsa clubs open at three A.M. and are still packed after breakfast. The cheap drug of choice is not crack but bazuko, a by-product of cocaine manufacturing, the color of dried plantains. From Manhattan, a drive over the Queensboro Bridge and along Queens Boulevard takes one 2,500 miles south to Cali and Medellín, where murders like the one in Meson Asturias are common.

This particular murder, however, came as less than a surprise because of the identity of the victim. Manuel de Dios "was looking," says one of his closest friends, "for the fucking bullet. We were surprised he lasted so long."

Pepe Aguera is circumspect about the events of that March evening. "I have to live here," he mumbles. "I have to be careful what I say." De Dios was paying him for a beer, Pepe volunteers. He was on his way out, having lost patience waiting for a source who never showed. He was to have met a woman whose husband had been "framed" as an accomplice in a drug ring. It was a classic local grievance, a small item for the latest issue of *Cambio XXI*, the little magazine that was his pulpit and in whose pages he waged a brash one-man campaign against the drug trade. It was due at the printers in the morning. Pepe froze as the hit man, the "mechanic," in the slang of homicide aficionados, entered with a hood pulled down over his face and fired the 9-mm. automatic. Some witnesses insisted there had been a "finger man," a spotter to point out the target. (The police, as with much else about the killing, don't know for sure.) After the clean, choreographed hit, the killer sauntered down Eighty-third Street and vanished somewhere along Roosevelt Avenue.

In Bogotá or Medellín, journalists are routinely dialed for execution, usually for treading too close to the murky intersection between Medellín drug barons and their allies in the military. In New York, such executions are so rare that a longtime observer of the city's criminal activity must dredge his memory to recall a reporter's getting "put to sleep." "I think it was 1943. A top soldier of the Genovese family is alleged to have hit this Italian newspaperman. He was bad-mouthing Mussolini. They whacked him on Eighteenth Street. Whacking a newspaperman, it's like the tide. You wash it out and it comes back in. You kill a newsman, you get more coming in."

The tide washed Manuel de Dios onto the front page of every paper in New York. On the day after he was killed, the sidewalk in front of Meson Asturias held enough reporters and camera crews to cover a presidential campaign. It was, ironically, as his friends and acquaintances pointed out, precisely the recognition de Dios had craved. Bravado had been his trademark. His constant reminders to colleagues that it was "good to die in the field" had finally come to fruition. A morbid joke circulating in the days after his death among those who knew him was that Manuel had ordered the hit himself.

An obscure Cuban-born newspaperman who had never mastered English, he was being posthumously promoted to national hero, a frontline casualty in the flagging war on drugs. Headlines eulogized his courageous investigations of drug traffickers: SLAIN NEWSMAN MADE CRIMINALS QUAKE; CRUSADER AGAINST DRUGS; HE DID HIS JOB TOO WELL—MAYBE THAT WAS DEADLY. He was the "pit bull" who during his five-year stint as editor of *El Diario–La Prensa*, New York's oldest and largest Spanish-language daily paper, sent reporters and photographers to document crack markets. At a Sunday Mass after de Dios's death, Cardinal O'Connor spoke of a man of "almost unbelievable courage and spirit" who had been determined "to try to turn this city and, to a degree, this nation around." Governor Mario Cuomo, Mayor David Dinkins, and ex-mayor Ed Koch—all of whom had been savaged in print by the deceased—paid similar tribute, and all made an appearance at a packed memorial Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral, one of three Masses held in de Dios's honor in New York City. A reward fund sponsored largely by New York news organizations quickly climbed to $67,000. Police and federal agencies announced the creation of a joint task force to work overtime on an investigation.

But it wasn't just the identity of the murderer that was murky. So, increasingly, were the outlines of his victim.

"He had so many enemies. So many enemies." Fernando Moreno, the current editor of *El Diario*, lights another Marlboro. "It was suicidal what he did." Moreno is handsome, rumpled, and uneasy about the death of the man who once occupied his desk. Moreno and de Dios had joined *El Diario* at the same time, in 1977. "They used to call us," Moreno says wistfully, the "*dúo dinámico*."

But by the time de Dios cleared out of his *El Diario* office, in June 1989, his prestige had been shattered; his vision and ambition had become twisted, according to colleagues, into a self-proclaimed messianic drive to save the Hispanic community. He would chase out the demons of drugs and corruption, alone. "He became," says Moreno wearily, "a lunatic."

El Diario's publisher, Carlos Ramírez, is on the phone down the hall, speaking, like everyone else in the pa-

"The day after he was shot we hear he was a hero. Two weeks later, he's a dirtbag. Five hundred people hated this guy."



SCENE OF THE CRIME: The white building, on Eighty-third Street off Roosevelt Avenue. "There were bigwigs involved," says an N.Y.P.D. veteran. "I believe the reason was political."

JONATHAN FINE

per's downtown-Manhattan office, in Spanish. His take on the man he once hired is cold and hard. "Manuel de Dios was a lanky, skinny guy who got away with murder." He pauses thoughtfully. "He deserves credit for being consistent. A consistent asshole."

At the LaGuardia Airport Marriott, in northern Queens, a detective on the de Dios case is sipping a Perrier with lime. "This case is a nightmare. I mean, the day after he was shot we hear he was a hero. Two weeks later, he's a dirtbag. Normally on an investigation you know which way to lean. But," he says, squeezing his lime, "five hundred people hated this guy."

Manuel de Dios Unanue was born in Camagüey, Cuba, in 1943, and lived on the island until he was twenty, attending Jesuit schools under the impetus of his mother's ambition (unfulfilled) that he become a priest. After Fidel Castro took power, the family joined the huge exodus of the Cuban middle class. Manuel was the first of his family to leave, and, according to his sister Teresita, he worked tirelessly until all his relatives had exit visas, too. They initially settled in Spain, but then, in 1967, for economic reasons, the de Dios Unanues (the Hispanic custom is to add the mother's family name after the father's surname) moved to Puerto Rico. Three years later, de Dios made a friend who was to change his life.

"Manuel was Don Quixote," sighs the man who launched him. "If there were windmills, he had to fight them." Marco Rigau, a leading senator in Puerto Rico, has been chairing a celebrated investigation into corruption, the Puerto

Rican Watergate, at which de Dios had testified only two weeks before his death. Brooding over a glass of rum and cranberry juice in an Old San Juan restaurant, Rigau ponders the consequences of his friendship with the late de Dios and then says, "In a way, I feel guilty about Manuel. No, not guilty, responsible. I brought him to New York, and I made him a journalist."

In 1970, Rigau was a precocious Harvard graduate and twenty-three-year-old professor of law at the Inter American University of Puerto Rico. "I had a Cuban girlfriend who told me that there was a Cuban in my class whom I ought to help. He was doing a master's in criminology and supporting himself by running what he called a cleaning firm. The firm actually consisted of Manuel and his broom, and he was going to have to drop out. So the next day in class I asked for Manuel de Dios and this tall skinny guy stands up." When the driven but impoverished student, who was actually four years older than his professor, said he needed $300 a month to survive, Rigau fixed him up with a research assistant's grant.

The two got on well, despite the fact that the gregarious teacher and his intense protégé did not have that much in common. "Manuel was *so* stubborn all the time, like he had blinkers on. He didn't date, hardly ever took a drink. He was the type," says Rigau, smiling indulgently, "that would go to the beach and take four books with him."

In 1973, when Rigau was offered a plum post in New York City, in charge of a Puerto Rican government office looking after immigrants, the ambitious de Dios grabbed his chance. "Manuel came to me and said, 'When do we leave? I'm coming with you.' " He was resolved to make his way in the wider world. The only slot open was press officer. "I said, 'Manuel, from today you are a journalist.' "

Rigau had insisted that their apartments should be close to the office, which turned out to be around Broadway and Forty-eighth Street. "Everyone in the apartment building was either a drug dealer or a prostitute," Rigau remembers.

De Dios could not speak a word of English, but from day one he was determined that the city accept him on his own, aggressively Hispanic terms. "He told me, 'Marco, I'm going to prove to you that you never have to speak English in New York.' We were buying furniture for our apartments at Macy's or Saks. And he was right. They brought over someone who spoke Spanish. He said, 'You see, make *them* learn.' "

Together, Rigau and de Dios began agitating for better treatment of Puerto Rican migrant laborers on the U.S. mainland. The effort, according to Rigau, ruffled powerful interests, and in 1974 he was forced to resign by the Puerto Rican governor. Rigau eventually found a job working for Mayor John Lindsay, running a task force on criminal justice for the Hispanic community. De Dios tagged along. "He never relaxed," Senator Rigau laughs. "Even when he was relaxing he was tense."

The two men parted ways in late 1974 when Rigau chose to return to San Juan to pursue politics. "Manuel said, 'I'm staying in New York.' " Unlike Rigau, he had no assured career back home, and the fragmented, dynamic world of Hispanic New York provided an ideal arena for his expanding ambitions. The senator shakes his head. "In a way, I think [de Dios] died the way he wanted to, as a man of honor, not as an old man with cancer."





LOVE AND GUILT
De Dios left his wife, Maria (next to him at a 1970s awards ceremony), for the Colombian Vicky Sánchez (*below*, with issues of his two magazines). "It was a sexual thing."

PHOTOGRAPH, BOTTOM, BY MICHAEL ACH

Ajusticiado. A "justified execution." That's how *Mensaje*, a staunch anti-Castro Cuban paper in New Jersey, hailed Manuel de Dios's death a day after the killing. It wasn't the first time expatriate Cubans had expressed disapproval.

De Dios had been involved in Cuban politics since before he left Puerto Rico. He was swept up in a movement called the *dialogueros*, the exiles who traveled to Havana to talk to Fidel. It was a dangerous pursuit. Militant Cuban exiles frown on chats with Castro.

De Dios's confidant and companion on some of the expeditions dusts off yellowing clippings of the two much younger men. "We were the pioneers," says Alberto Rodriguez in his cramped quarters in the San Juan primary school where he is principal. There is a photo of Rodriguez's charred house with the headline EXILE CHIEF'S HOME BOMBED. In 1972, Rodriguez had led a group of like-minded exiles, de Dios included, to Jamaica to meet with representatives from Havana. "[My] house was burnt down. We were fortunate to escape."

Several years later, militant Cuban exiles sent de Dios a message addressed more directly to him. After he joined *El Diario* as a reporter in 1977, he used the larger platform the paper afforded him to further expound his views. Before de Dios, says Moreno, the other half of the *dúo dinámico*, *El Diario* had been "an anti-Castro rag"; he turned it into "a real paper." His goal, as before, was to find a strategy for ending the bitter feud between Castro and the exiles. In 1978, the offices of *El Diario* were bombed. "It was a Saturday and nobody got hurt," remembers Moreno. "They called us Castro collaborators. Omega 7 [an exile paramilitary group] was very active in New York City. It was incredible, the death threats." "I think all the Cubans in this town [still] hate him," comments Ramírez, *El Diario*'s publisher. "Once you talk to Castro, they hate you."

Friends maintain that de Dios had no pro-Castro tendencies, only a vision of how to deal with Fidel. But de Dios's "vision" went beyond a newspaperman's calls for dialogue, and appeared



Donald Judd in one of his Marfa studios, *inset*, and the architecture studio in the Bank Building. *Opposite*, Claes Oldenburg's *Monument to the Last Horse*, 1991, one of Marfa's permanent installations.

Photographs by TODD EBERLE

Donald Judd hates the art world with a grand passion. That is partly why he lives in Marfa, Texas, which is farther from New York (in everything but distance) than Tokyo. He doesn't live there in a small way. Over the last twenty years, the artist has bought up much of the town, including an abandoned army base and 400,000 acres of ranchland skirting the border with Mexico. That's roughly thirty times bigger than Manhattan.

His stated purpose is to exhibit properly and permanently the art he admires. But you don't need a kingdom to do that. In Marfa, Judd, sixty-four, is also proposing an alternative to almost everything New York represents. Not cluttered by trees or people and close to Mexico, Marfa is a place to see fewer



Judd's dipping pool at his ranch house. *Opposite*, three 1960s Judd paintings hang in the Bank Building.



In Marfa,
no firm boundary exists
between spaces for living
and spaces for viewing art.

(and other) things better. The surrounding mountains and near desert are clear and stark, exactly the sort of "wilderness" that has attracted prophets and visionaries since biblical times.

Which is what Judd has become—to the surprise of many who think they know his art. The conventional view of Judd is that he is a Minimalist interested in pared-down geometries; most people like or dislike his work based upon their views of that art movement. Judd himself calls his outlook "empiricist," and generally disapproves of finding anything in art but art. He is certainly not religious. Yet the scale and intensity of what he's doing in West Texas—unlike anything else in recent American art—have an unmistakable visionary shimmer.

Judd is a man obsessed with perfecting the plain, restoring the essential, locating the just—and not only in art. He represents an important tradition of American plainsong; he is more like a Shaker, it now seems, than a SoHo star. He designs furniture characterized by craft and a reverence for materials. He respectfully restores the utilitarian structures of his Texas cow town. In Marfa, he has even posited a shadow community, an implied gathering of true believers from anywhere who are willing to make a pilgrimage to see important art.

Among his projects, Judd has transformed a former army gymnasium into an elegant "common" space—an ample arena used for "feasts" each October, when supporters from around the world come to Marfa to celebrate his work. (About eight hundred came last year.) Everyone eats on long wooden tables that evoke the pleasures of communal dining, reminiscent of those used by farmers and soldiers. Sympathetic artists are welcome to stay and work in Marfa. Around town Judd has created gardens, a library, spaces for temporary exhibitions, a printshop.

An entire warehouse is given to the work of John Chamberlain. Judd wants to do the same for Dan Flavin and others he respects. His own masterpiece is on display in two modified army warehouses. It is nothing more or less than one hundred square boxes made of highly polished mill aluminum, fifty to a building. The boxes are the same size and shape, but not identical. Some have open sides or tops; the interior planes vary. Judd keeps a piece of mill aluminum near the entrance for those people who must touch. His hope is that they will not smear art with their greasy fingers.

Judd's boxes are both severe and lyrical. While the right angles may appear strict, for example, the reflections on the silvery aluminum often dematerialize surface and dissolve line. The aluminum is factory-plain and jewel-bright.



Judd's masterpiece consists of one hundred mill-aluminum boxes, displayed in two modified army warehouses.

Between open and enclosed space, inside and outside, there is constant play. The scale of the boxes in relation to both the building and a standing person also appears just right. It is probably not Judd's intention, but the regiment of boxes is also beguilingly strange—a flash of silver in a parched Texas field.

An overarching system might seem to govern this vast playing out of theme and variation. But the work is not Bach by other means. Judd believes in facing facts. If we lack a faith in order comparable to Bach's, then art must not pretend otherwise. So the piece is less than Bach, but no less true.

Judd has a wry sense of humor, but—no surprise—little patience for the ordinary world. He denounces (in a soft voice) most recent art as "totally mediocre." Sometimes he gives the impression of never having had a doubt in his life. He is friendly enough, but restless. He travels around Marfa in his pickup like one of those medieval monarchs who constantly moved about the kingdom. A curious feature of many of his buildings is that they usually contain a bed and sink. Judd, who is divorced and a natural solitary, can stay almost anywhere.

In Marfa, no firm boundary exists between spaces for living and spaces for viewing art. And Judd's vision now extends to the land itself. He hopes to restore his 400,000 acres to health after years of overgrazing. The mention of a neighbor who recently brought in bulldozers and a mobile home makes him wince as if his flesh were being torn. He spends much time alone at his remote ranches.

If Judd regards the art world as a pit of decadence, he himself (like many visionaries) is more than willing to negotiate with the Devil to support his plans. He shows and sells aggressively. This month he is exhibiting his sculpture in Japan and his furniture in Germany. In September he will show his furniture in New York. His politics, however, remain uncompromising. A partisan of oppressed peoples and overlooked values, he despises the slick industrial face of American power. He likes old Scottish bagpipe music; his kitchen table is piled high with prehistoric arrowheads. He admires the art of the Indians in Guatemala more than, say, that of the artists in New York. He exhibits it, too. This is how a typical conversation goes with Judd:

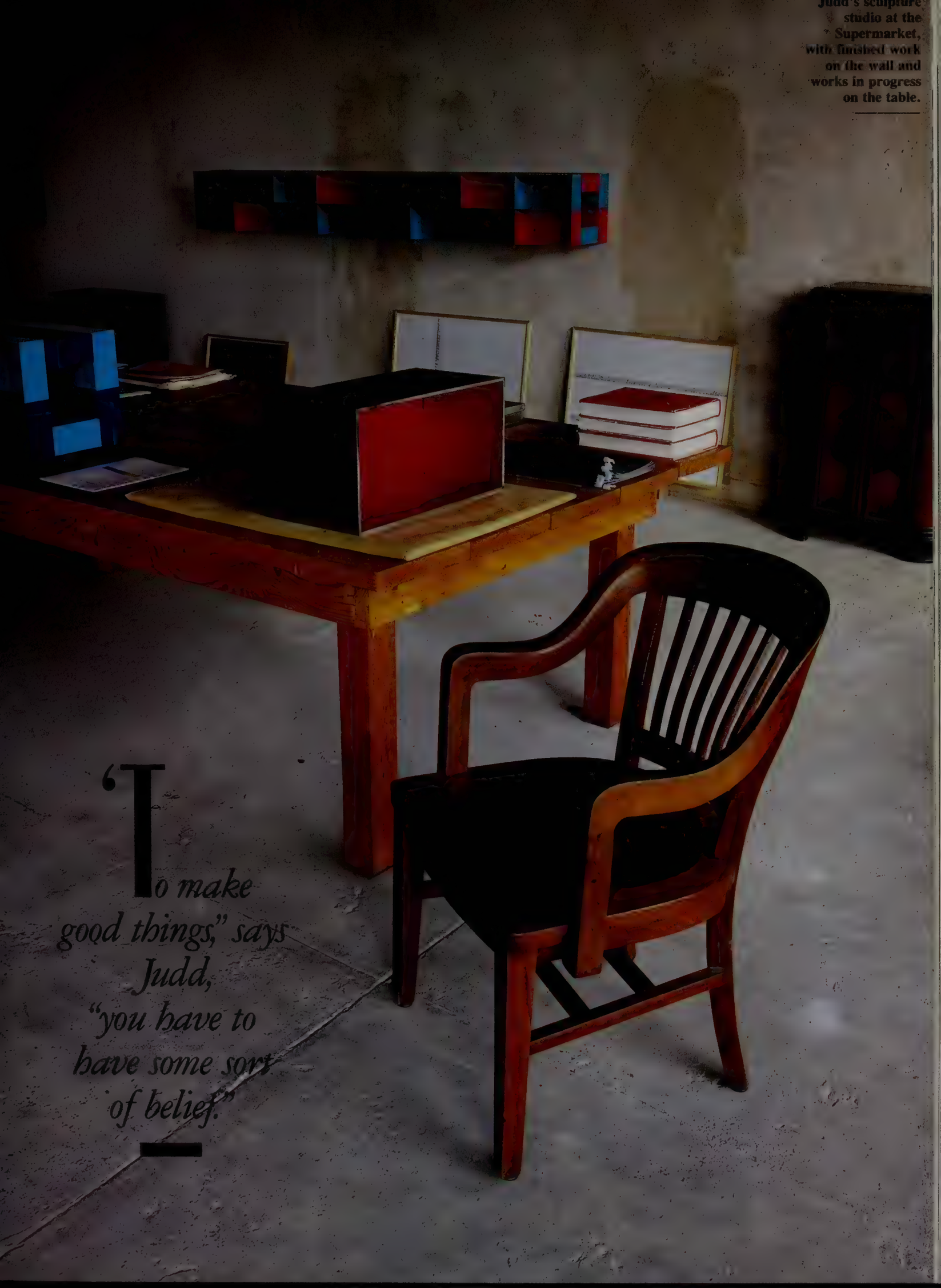
"All the good things you would like to look at or have around you are now being produced by small groups of people who are taking a beating. The U.S. doesn't produce decent pots, jewelry, textiles. You have to go to the Navahos. It says something about the civilization."

What?

"Pretty lousy civilization."

What makes the Guatemalans different?

"To make good things you have to have some sort of belief." □



Judd's sculpture studio at the Supermarket, with finished work on the wall and works in progress on the table.

"To make good things," says Judd, "you have to have some sort of belief."

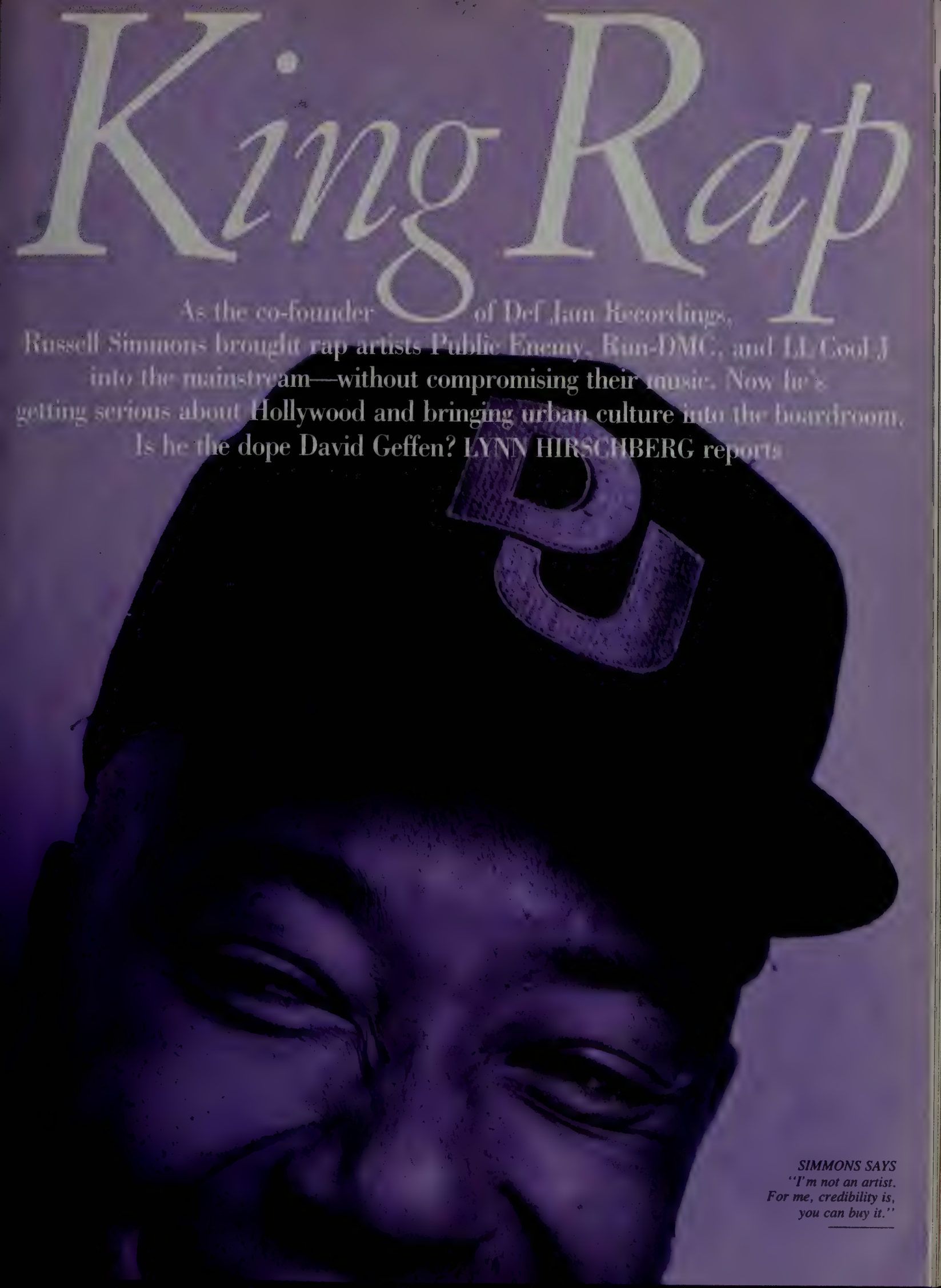


From left, MC Serch, Russell Simmons, Darryl McDaniels (DMC of Run-DMC), Rob Swift (Law and Order), and Tanisha Michele (Bytches with Problems), in Simmons's New York apartment.

Photographs by BRUCE WEBER

King Rap

As the co-founder of Def Jam Recordings, Russell Simmons brought rap artists Public Enemy, Run-DMC, and LL Cool J into the mainstream—without compromising their music. Now he's getting serious about Hollywood and bringing urban culture into the boardroom. Is he the dope David Geffen? LYNN HIRSCHBERG reports



SIMMONS SAYS
"I'm not an artist. For me, credibility is, you can buy it."



Spring 1992: It's the night of the Grammys and Russell Simmons, who isn't going ("Fuck no!"), is sitting in the bedroom of his triplex apartment in the East Village talking on the phone. He is wearing his nearly constant uniform of loose jeans, hooded sweatshirt, baseball hat, untied gray Adidas, and while he talks into the speakerphone ("I hate that Grammy shit") he fiddles with his watch, a gold Cartier. The bedroom, which, like the rest of the apartment, used to be Cher's until Simmons bought it completely furnished two years ago for $1.6 million, is decorated in a style that would best be called Southwestern Meets Egyptian. Except for some framed photos, mostly of models such as Naomi Campbell, Beverly Peele ("like my daughter"), and Michelle Griffin ("my girlfriend"), the apartment, which is almost entirely beige, is virtually devoid of personal touches. "Russell didn't change a thing," says a friend. "He just added some phones. Cher didn't have enough phone lines for Russell."

Although he has three offices—including one down the block which handles his various record labels, most notably Def Jam, and another in Tribeca which houses his management company—Simmons works out of this apartment. And when he's here, he's almost always on the phone. He's checking in with his L.A. partner Stan Lathan over their new TV show on HBO, *Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam,* or he's calling up his office to find out how many radio stations have added the new Alyson Williams single to their playlist, or he's phoning an investment banker to find out if there's been any progress on WDEF, his proposed syndicated hip-hop radio network.

There's always something. He (and his various partners) has movies in development at TriStar, a second TV show at HBO ready to go to pilot, and then there is the heart of his business—the artists. The thirty-four-year-old Simmons manages, among others, Slick Rick, Run-DMC, EPMD, LL Cool J, and Public Enemy, some of the biggest stars in rap. "Russell Simmons is a rap mogul," says Quincy Jones. "He is an American original—he went from being part of the subculture to being *the* culture. And now everybody wants to be in business with him. When they get Russell, they get a way into a huge business that they don't really understand."

"A big difference between my company and a lot of other black entertainment companies," Simmons explains between calls, "is I don't sell black culture to black people. I sell black culture to people who are consumers of black culture. The difference is color and background. We market our product to everyone who will buy it."

As always, Simmons is interrupted by the phone. Tonight, he has several things on his mind: the Grammys, or, more specifically, which post-Grammy party to attend; his new watch, which is about to arrive from Bulgari; and LL Cool J, who is performing his double-platinum hit "Mama Said Knock You Out" on the show tonight. Brett Ratner, a friend of Simmons's who seems to live at his apartment, is perched on the edge of Russell's four-poster bed, fielding phone calls of his own. "LL has the best show," Ratner says. "It's going to be dope."

Simmons says nothing to this and stares a second—he seems half concerned and half restless. He gets bored very easily—the last book he read was *The Man,* by Irving Wallace, and that was back in college. "I can't focus on a book," he says. "It takes too long. Allen Grubman [one of Simmons's lawyers] can't read or write anything, but neither do I—so that's why we get along. I've never seen a lawbook anywhere near his firm."

Simmons picks up the phone. "Paul Schindler [a partner in Grubman's firm] can't read, either," he says, dialing Schindler's number. The point of this call is a deal Simmons is helping to negotiate with MCA on behalf of his friend Andre Harrell, head of Uptown Records. "You're too rich," Simmons says, addressing the phone as if it were Schindler himself. "And you don't have any black lawyers in your firm." They then debate the merits of tonight's various parties. Schindler is going to Sony's at the Plaza hotel. "There are



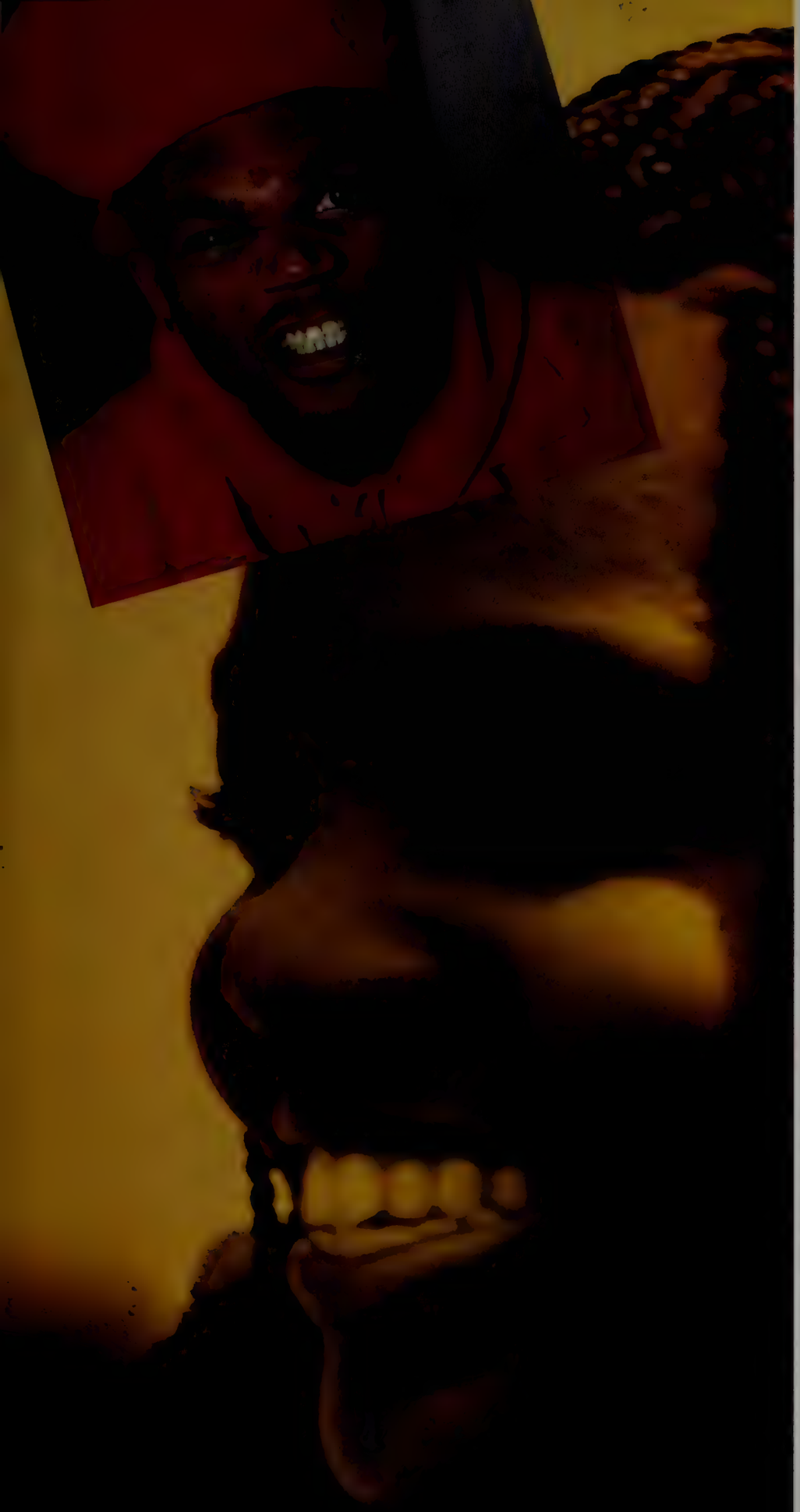
SMOOTH OPERATOR
Simmons works double-time on the StairMaster and the phone, opposite. Above, *Jam Master Jay, Run-DMC's D.J., with Simmons.*

"Russell went from being part of the subculture to being *the* culture," says Quincy Jones.



BEG TO DEFFER
Simmons and Tanisha Michele.
Inset, clockwise from bottom left, *Def Jam clients LL Cool J, MC Serch, and Darryl McDaniels.*

"The boots gotta go," Simmons told L.L. Cool J.



"Put some Adidas on."

not enough niggers at Sony," says Simmons, whose multimillion-dollar record deal is with Sony. "I'm going to MCA's party at the Four Seasons."

The phone rings again. It is Parish, one-half of the rap group EPMD, whose initials stand for Erick and Parish Making Dollars. Simmons bought their contract for a cool million when their first label folded, and he is eager to hear their new tracks.

"What up?" Simmons says. "Play something. Play *anything*."

Parish resists. "I seen Vanilla Ice walking in Manhattan today," he says, switching the subject.

"That nigger's laughing," says Simmons. "He's fucking Madonna and everyone else."

"I waved," continues Parish, "but he didn't wave back. I was going, 'Oh, shit. Vanilla Ice. Ten million sales. A movie. The whole shit.' "

"Come on, Parish," Simmons says. "Play your shit."

Parish demurs. "They won't play their record for me," Simmons says. "They want me to put it out without hearing it." A date is finally set for a listen and Simmons hangs up.

As Simmons makes himself a tuna sandwich, Kenny Lee, a childhood friend and now his driver, arrives from Bulgari. It seems Simmons's chronometer watch, with three small faces set in one large face, originally had a solid-gold band. "The other band was like a rock," he says, strapping on a new, leather band. "The other shit was overdone. This one's cool."

Ratner gets off the phone to inspect the watch. "That one's fly," he says. Simmons takes the watch off. "I don't know if I like it now that I've got it," he says, going back to his sandwich. "It's just uncomfortable."

The phone keeps ringing, and Simmons's current (and soon to be ex-) girlfriend, Michelle, a beautiful twenty-year-old, who is wearing a skintight black catsuit and short high-heeled boots, arrives. "Are you going to wear that tonight?" Simmons says, kissing her hello. Michelle looks exhausted and slumps into a corner. "I was thinking you would wear that dress I bought you," Simmons continues. "I'm going to wear dungarees, but girls have to dress up. That way, we look like a unit." Michelle nods rather wearily.

The phone rings again and it is Tracy

Waples, an A&R person at Def Jam. "What up with LL tonight?" she says, referring to his scheduled Grammy performance. Simmons looks genuinely worried. LL Cool J is his pet project—at twenty-three, he has the makings of a superstar. His albums consistently go platinum, but Hammer-level fame has eluded him, partly because his music is too sexual, too street. Tonight, Simmons's fear is that LL will go against that edge, that he will wear glitter, play it mainstream. "I gotta make LL the superstar he wants to be," he says. "He can sell 10 million records. Why not? I remember he wore cowboy boots when I met him because he wanted to make it. They were wearing those fucking silly boots. They used to fold over like Captain America and shit. He wore them because they were rock 'n' roll. But the boots gotta go. Put some Adidas on."

Simmons put LL Cool J (which stands for Ladies Love Cool James) into new shoes and a Kangol hat, which became his trademark. One of Simmons's greatest talents is in shaping his artists. He grooms them, dresses them, and perfects their persona. "I take what they have and make it better," he explains. "But they don't always listen."

"LL'll always listen to you," says Ratner. "He always has." Ratner has been around Simmons long enough to know that his insecurities don't count for much.

In 1977, Russell Simmons, then a student of sociology at the City University of New York, heard his first-ever rapper. "It was Eddie Cheeba at a club called Charles Gallery on 125th Street," he recalls over lunch at the Time Cafe, a restaurant around the corner from his apartment. "And it was amazing."

Simmons, whose teenage nickname was Rush, grew up in Hollis, Queens; his father was a professor of black history at Pace University and his mother was a civil servant. "They were not typical," says Gary Harris, who once worked for Simmons at Def Jam and has known him since the late seventies. "They were an art family."

After Simmons saw Cheeba, he decided to put on some shows on campus. He printed up stickers—RUSH, THE FORCE IN COLLEGE PARTIES, PRESENTS—and, along with his younger brother, Joey (who would one day become Run of Run-DMC), plastered the subways. "We would overdo it," Simmons recalls. "I always thought more was better."

Robert Ford, who covered the black-music scene for *Billboard*, saw the Rush stickers and did a story on Simmons and his shows. He also gave him advice on making records and promotion. In 1979, Ford and Simmons and an ad exec named J. B. Moore wrote Kurtis Blow's "Christmas Rappin'." It was a smash in the clubs, and Mercury Records picked it up, becoming the first major label to distribute a rap single. Simmons was ecstatic—he was Kurtis Blow's manager.

"Back then, there was a lot of 'Fuck you' in rap," recalls Simmons. "The audience was black then, and people wanted to create their own shit. They didn't want to join in with the rest of the fucking society. They got no sense of joy in that. It wasn't like suburban kids, who are rebellious for the hell of it. For black kids, it's 'I'm trying to make it out here, I'm trying my best to make money.' It was 'I'm a rapper, I've got a Rolls-Royce, fuck y'all. And *(Continued on page 137)*

SPOTLIGHT

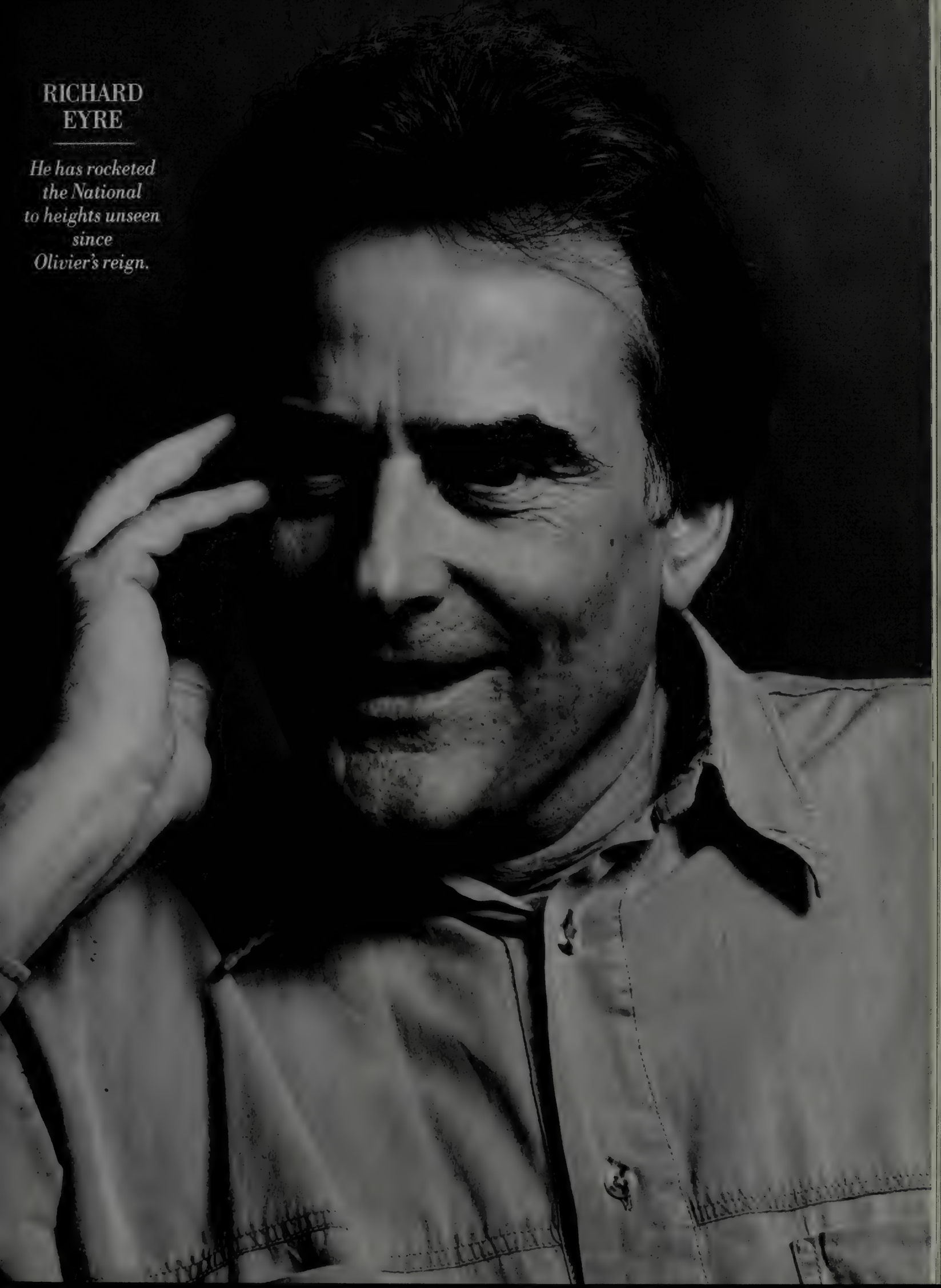
Eyre Apparent

"When they were handing out looks, talent, integrity, sensitivity... Richard was right there at the front of the queue," comments writer Ian McEwan of his friend Richard Eyre, head of Britain's Royal National Theatre, whose production of *Richard III* starring Sir Ian McKellen is on a sixteen-week tour of America. Forty-nine years old, married to TV producer Sue Birtwistle, and the father of a seventeen-year-old daughter, Eyre has in less than four years rocketed the National to heights unseen since the heady early years of Sir Laurence Olivier's reign. Unlike his predecessor, the pugnacious Sir Peter Hall, Eyre has made the National a Utopian place to work. "There's no intrigue," says Alan Bennett, a long-standing artistic ally, whose play *The Madness of George III* is one of the season's triumphs. "Richard responds to enthusiasms," remarks Knopf head Sonny Mehta, a friend since their Cambridge days. "A marriage broker" is how Eyre describes himself, meaning that his first priority is to spark the kind of matches which produce prodigies like *Angels in America* (the result of pairing maverick Irish director Declan Donnellan with little-known New Yorker Tony Kushner—"the best American playwright since David Mamet"), another sizzling ticket at the National. Eyre insists he couldn't do his job unless he directed as well: "The trick is combining the two." His fellow director Nicholas Hytner describes Eyre's *Richard III*, a strongly conceptual production with its slant of twentieth-century British Fascism, as "visually spare and intellectually flamboyant." —JULIE KAVANAGH

Photograph by SNOWDON

RICHARD EYRE

He has rocketed the National to heights unseen since Olivier's reign.







Robinson at the presidential residence in Dublin. "There's a sneaking, surprised pride in the electorate that they put her there," says Seamus Heaney.

Proud Mary

America may be deadlocked in bitter struggles over sexual harassment and abortion rights. But Mary Robinson, the first woman to become president of Ireland, is inspiring a wave of grass-roots feminism that is challenging centuries of repression in a country rocked by recent scandals pitting sex against the church.

MAUREEN ORTH reports

She is walking alone behind the gnarled men of the village who have come to greet her with a big green satin banner that says, "May God Save Ireland." She considers herself in the same business these days. Along the way the schoolchildren have lined up on both sides of the road, and the junior band, all apple-cheeked and scrubbed for the biggest day this tiny place has seen in perhaps centuries, is playing tin whistles in a rousing Presidential Salute. It is a tableau of tradition and timelessness in the Irish countryside except that it has never happened before and would not have but for her.

She has come at the invitation of the women—to honor them and their efforts to hold body and soul together in this largely forgotten dot on the map in the far west of conservative Catholic Ireland. She herself was born and reared in the nearby town of Ballina,

Photograph by SNOWDON

and she understands what for so long has been unspoken. It is the women of the Ladies' Association who actually run things around here in rural Carracastle, County Mayo. They must make do for their families in a dramatic, underdeveloped landscape of seaside cliffs and misty bogs, a land of long depressing winters and scarce jobs, ravaged by emigration, where government services seldom reach. But no one has ever acknowledged the Ladies' Association before. Now it is almost too much to bear that on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary the president is taking notice, and that the president is a woman herself.

"She's here, ladies, and she's walkin'!" cries the first village woman to spy President Mary Robinson as she approaches the small community center, crammed with people in their Sunday best. She steps across the red carpet laid out for her and makes her way to the stage amid whistles and cheers. Robinson's bearing is naturally regal; tall, tawny-haired, a perfect size 8, she is chicly turned out in a long green jacket paired with a short navy skirt. But even now, in these confident glory days, there is still a certain awkwardness to her gestures that betrays an ingrained shyness—she frequently presses the backs of her knuckles together and constantly nods her head up and down. For the villagers, however, Mary Robinson's mere presence is a celebration of gender, of heart, and of the Irish spirit.

"To me this is the face of modern Ireland, and a community that is developing its own self-reliance, its own strengths, and that is very much providing the care and the services and looking after old people, looking after those who have special needs in the community," the forty-eight-year-old mother of three tells her audience in a throaty contralto that carries the polished tones of the boarding-school top girl she once was. "I have great pride going around the country and seeing so much of this kind of self-development."

"Every woman in the village voted for her," a mother of seven tells me. "A woman has to do her job ten times better than a man to be acknowledged," says a schoolteacher from nearby Castlebar who was presented an award by the president for her work with children. "It's easier now to come forward because of Mary Robinson."

"We're very isolated," says a third woman, who lives in a small town outside of Galway and helps publish a newsletter for women's groups in western Ireland. "Women are considered tea-makers and childminders. She makes men look at our input. She's mentioned [the newsletter] on two TV interviews, and when she mentions us it's euphoria."



Robinson (right) celebrates a Labour victory in 1979—an image that later prompted John Rogers, adviser to the head of the Labour Party, to approach her to run for the presidency.

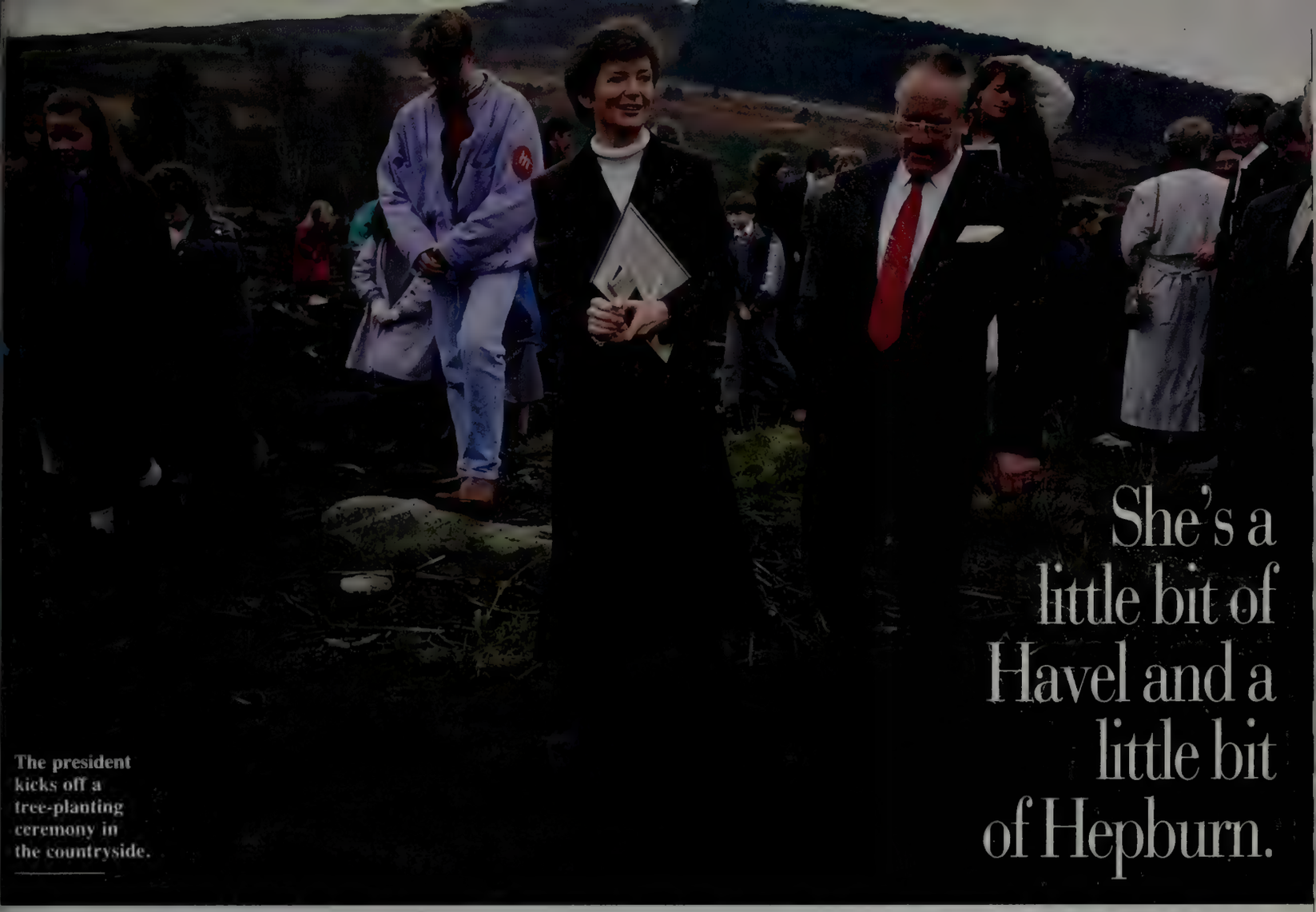
Indeed, as time goes on—Robinson is now in the second year of her seven-year term—it doesn't seem to matter much that the presidency of Ireland is largely a ceremonial role or that she is enjoined by the Irish Constitution from speaking out or participating directly in politics. She campaigned to change the office, which has long been viewed as a sinecure for retiring male party leaders. "We talk about the president not having power, but she is very important for empowering," says the noted Irish poet Seamus Heaney, who has known her for years. She represents, proclaims poet Paul Durcan, a move away from the last decade's preoccupation with "the gun, the altar, and the credit card."

The Irish have never seen anything quite like Mary. She's a little bit of Havel and a little bit of Hepburn. Once a radical crusader, she's now the country's most prominent self-esteem therapist, the moral force who embodies, says Heaney, "the new secular modern Ireland." To govern, she gets down on her knees, not to beg or to pray but to put her ear to the ground. "I'm a Catholic from Mayo" is how Robinson has described herself—as if the arc of her former career as a liberal senator and human-rights attorney weren't in direct conflict with the church and many rural Irish traditions.

"She told me, once, she saw her role as being 'quietly subversive,' " says a friend, Lewis Clohessy. "The Constitution is there, but there's no doubt she pushes the envelope out," adds Robinson's brother Henry Bourke, a barrister. "If I were a politician, I would want to use her in the nicest possible way. At the same time I'd keep a sharp eye on her."

"I feel I can change perceptions about equality," Mary Robinson herself tells me when we meet at her residence. "This office allows me to be more symbolic, more reflective, to engage in lateral thinking, to do the unexpected."

In her quest to redefine the Irish presidency she has also transformed herself. The Mary Robinson of today, who sifts distinguished invitations to speak from all over the world, who in July is opening the four-day meeting of the Global Forum of Women in Dublin, is far more glamorous and outgoing than the Mary Robinson of old. And yet much of her power seems derived from an unrehearsed quality. "The Queen of England's smile is a ceremonial smile," observes Heaney. "Mary's smile comes from a slight anxiety...that says to people, 'I'm here, I'm your president,



She's a little bit of Havel and a little bit of Hepburn.

The president kicks off a tree-planting ceremony in the countryside.

I'm also a previous self.' Some of her authority is mixed up with her candor."

The real challenge was to redirect her passionate, if legalistic, oratory into a new language of symbols and poetic allusion that would neatly sidestep political minefields. Gone is the firebrand who in an unguarded moment during the election campaign told *Hot Press*, Ireland's *Rolling Stone*, "The whole patriarchal, male-dominated presence of the Catholic Church is probably the worst aspect of all the establishment forces that have sought to do down women over the years," and went on to charge that the Irish government didn't "give a shit" about the émigrés.

Robinson was twenty-five in 1969—the youngest woman in the history of the Irish senate, the first female professor of law at Trinity College in Dublin—when she boldly introduced legislation to legalize contraception. It wasn't until 1973 that she actually got a hearing on the subject. For years afterward she also got obscene letters and used condoms in the mail. "That taught me, if you believe in something, you must be prepared to pay the price," Robinson says. How utterly satisfying it must be for her now to realize that, at the very moment she was being vociferously attacked by the Catholic hierarchy for introducing the contraception legislation, the popular Bishop Eamonn Casey, late of Galway, was having unprotected sex with a young Connecticut woman whose family had entrusted her to his care. The recent scandal rocked the Catholic Church in Ireland to its very core as the beleaguered, if not bemused, citizenry learned that not only is the bishop the neglectful father of the woman's seventeen-year-old son, he had also paid her more than $100,000 from church funds.

As the bishop abruptly resigned his post and fled the country, it was impossible not to be further reminded that Robinson herself has always been fearless in the fight. As each new obstacle loomed, she attacked back with intellectual abandon. She championed and won rights for gays and for children born out of wedlock; got women the right to sit on juries, and eighteen-year-olds the right to vote; broadened the concept of legal aid, and shrewdly superseded the paternal hierarchy of the Irish legal establishment by taking equality cases to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. "Irish people hate conflict," observes screenwriter Eoghan Harris, one of Robinson's media advisers during her presidential campaign. "Mary Robinson is comfortable with conflict."

Robinson has also achieved what no American female politician has been able to: she caught the ear of the women with her feminist beliefs, and now even the men are listening. The First Citizen, as the Constitution calls her, is crisscrossing Ireland with the message that feminism should be an inclusive, humanistic social tool and not, as she very politely but firmly characterizes much of American feminism, "exclusive"—"a rather hard-line approach." She wants to strengthen the family, to place a higher value on the image and work of women who, for whatever part of their lives, stay at home, contribute to their communities in volunteer efforts, and learn in the *(Continued on page 128)*

DAVID LEVENSON



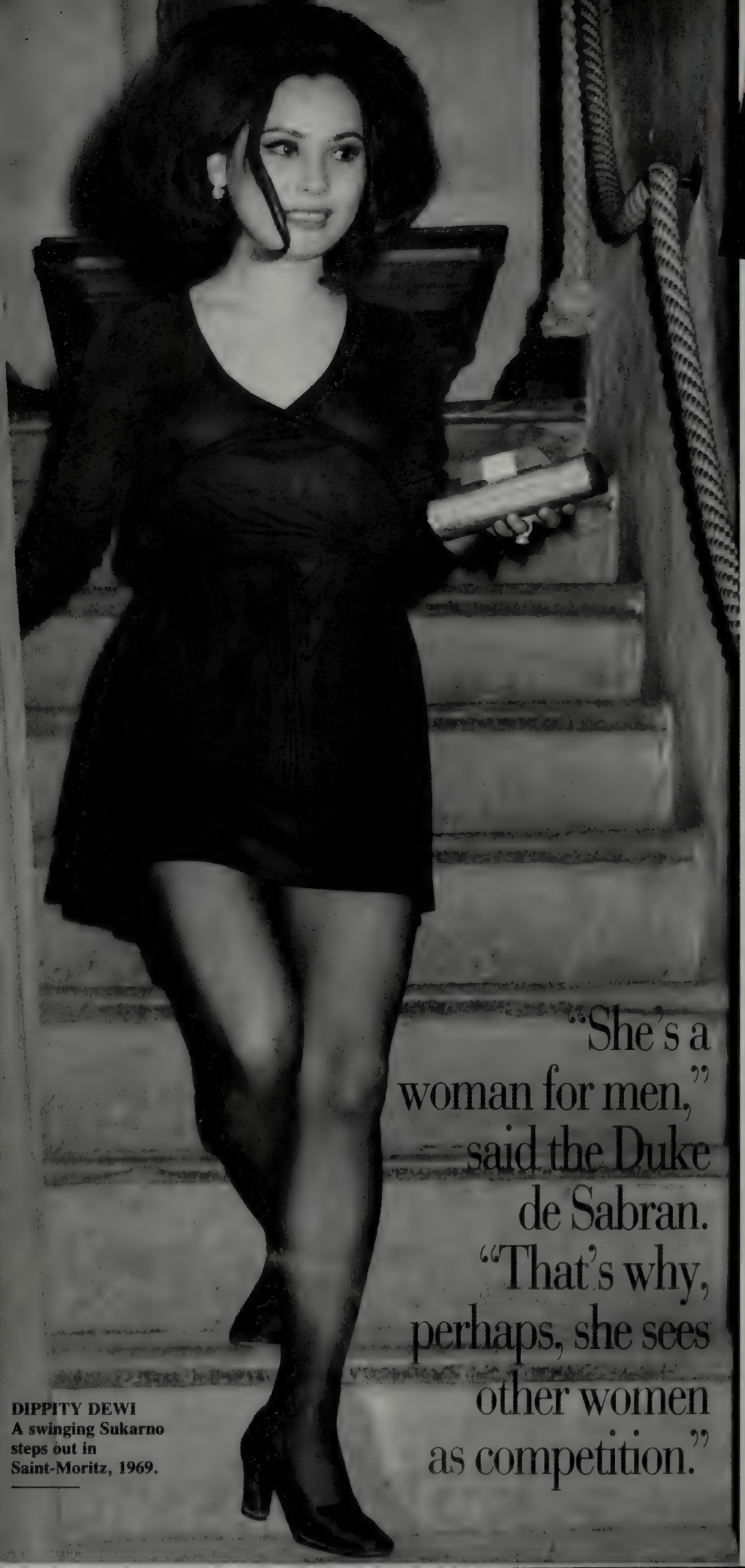
CRUISING FOR A BRUISING
Dewi, in flowered leggings, is separated from Minnie by Stephen Benson aboard the yacht of the Marquis de Campoflorido, far right, off Ibiza last August, when the two ladies had their first blowup. Also pictured: the Marquise de Campoflorido and Giorgio Pavone. *Opposite,* Dewi "Goddess of the Essence of Jewels" Sukarno at El Morocco.

DON'T CRY FOR ME, INDONESIA

Dewi Sukarno, the sultry Japanese lounge singer who became the fifth wife of the late Indonesian strongman, is well known among the jet set for her explosive *amours fous*. But what led to her Aspen catfight with another Asian beauty, anti-Marcos Filipina Minnie Osmeña, which now threatens to put Dewi behind bars? BOB COLACELLO reports



Photograph by ERIC BOMAN • Styled by MARINA SCHIANO



"She's a woman for men," said the Duke de Sabran. "That's why, perhaps, she sees other women as competition."

DIPPITY DEWI
A swinging Sukarno steps out in Saint-Moritz, 1969.



It's not quite clear, from the press reports, who called whom a whore just seconds before a champagne glass held by Dewi Sukarno, a former First Lady of Indonesia, smashed into the face of Minnie Osmeña, a granddaughter of a president of the Philippines, at a jet-set party in Aspen last January. Nor is it clear in what language that and other alleged insults were hurled. A busboy who witnessed the bloody incident in the Primavera restaurant at the Aspen Club Lodge told police that Dewi Sukarno was "cursing in either Spanish or Italian." The Austrian host, Prince Heinrich Hanau-Schaumburg, was quoted as saying he thought the two women were "shouting at each other" in Tagalog, the native Philippine tongue. In her statement to the police, Dewi Sukarno insisted that Minnie Osmeña had called her a whore, in plain English, but Minnie Osmeña has denied this. Minnie "called Dewi 'a miniscule little snail from nowhere,' " the London *Sunday Times* reported. "Dewi snapped back, 'You are a geisha girl from a Japanese brothel.' "

Contrary to a number of reports, Barbra Streisand and George Hamilton were not at the party. Billionaire oilman David Koch, supermodel Elle Macpherson, Cornelia Guest, Joanna Carson, and Jane Holzer, with her son Rusty, were. Ivana Trump was on her way out when the ambulance arrived to take Minnie Osmeña to the Aspen Valley Hospital. Cuts on her forehead, eyelid, and cheek required thirty-seven stitches.

After being questioned by the police in an office at the Aspen Club Lodge, Dewi Sukarno "made the spontaneous statement," as one cop's report put it, "that she should be able to go back to the party." Instead, Madame Sukarno, as she is called, was informed that she was under arrest for second-degree as-







CALL HER MADAME
Left to right: Dewi does the frug with Roman designer Valentino, 1966; Dewi with Sukarno in Paris, 1965; Dewi with her husband's biographer, gossip columnist Cindy Adams, 1991; Dewi, charged with assault, is escorted by lawyers in Colorado.

sault and was read her Miranda rights. Wearing a full-length sable coat and dangling diamond earrings, she was taken in a patrol car to the Pitkin County Jail, where she was fingerprinted, photographed, and given a voluntary breath test which showed she was not legally intoxicated. She was then released on $5,000 bail.

The ravishing beauty, who was once married to one of the most powerful dictators in Asia, now faces up to sixteen years in a Colorado state prison and a $500,000 fine, as well as a $10 million civil suit brought against her by Minnie Osmeña. Madame Sukarno's lawyer, Barry Slotnick, whose clients have included John Gotti, General Manuel Noriega, and subway gunman Bernhard Goetz, has filed a countersuit "for more than $10 million," charging Osmeña with "slander, assault, and outrageous conduct."

"She's trying to make it look like a catfight. It's not a catfight," says Minnie Osmeña, whose sultry beauty matches Dewi Sukarno's. As Osmeña told a Philippine newspaper, "It's an assault case. It is a crime. And it really irritates me that she wants to drag me down to her level."

"It *is* a catfight," counters Madame Sukarno's longtime confidante and staunchest supporter, *New York Post* gossip columnist Cindy Adams. "We're talking two lionesses. Two gorgeous, Asian, social lionesses. Well, make that one lioness. And a tabby."

Though they have known each other for more than fifteen years, and have apartments in the same building in both New York and Paris, the two ladies now play down any friendship they may have had. "I've only seen this woman ten times in my life," Minnie Osmeña, who is reportedly forty-three, told me. "She has never been of interest to me," Dewi Sukarno, reportedly fifty-two, told me. That is not what I heard from numerous American, European, and Asian social, political, and media sources. They chronicled a long mutual history which deteriorated from instant rapport to seething hostility, and which flared into a fiery verbal confrontation—over a third Asian political beauty, Imelda Marcos—on a yacht off Ibiza last summer.

Some say that Minnie Osmeña had developed an apparent obsession with Dewi Sukarno and that she seemed particularly envious of her international fame. Others say that it was Dewi Sukarno who seemed envious of Minnie Osmeña's recent multimillion-dollar divorce settlement from her third husband, Carnation-milk heir Dwight Stuart. But even those who take Dewi Sukarno's side admit that Minnie Osmeña was not the only woman she clashed with in public. A Parisian hostess from a prominent Arab family notes, "Aspen, alas, was not her first *scandale*."

In Paris, where Madame Sukarno lived in exile for fifteen years after her husband was toppled in a 1966 coup, various socialites recall several outbursts in nightclubs involving champagne glasses or ice buckets and a scene outside the Duchess de La Rochefoucauld's house involving a gun, though none of these incidents resulted in serious injury or criminal charges. Her highly publicized 1977 dispute with Regine led to a lawsuit: "The Queen of the Night" claimed that "the Pearl of the Orient," as the French press had dubbed Madame Sukarno, had slapped another patron, and banned her from her nightclub; Madame Sukarno told me that Regine "was furious" because she had hosted a party at a rival club. After a three-year publicity tempest, a Paris judge found that Regine had no right to ban her from what was ruled a public place, and awarded Madame Sukarno one franc.

Most of these previous contretemps had something to do with a man. And the battle of Aspen? Minnie Osmeña suggests that the ill will may have had its roots in an extramarital romance between President Sukarno and a beauteous Filipina who was a relation of the Osmeñas, back in the days when both families were at the height of their power in their neighboring Asian island nations.

When the Japanese-born Dewi Sukarno met the Indonesian strongman in 1959, he had already been "President for Life" for a decade, and was a noisy player on the world stage as one of the leaders of the Non-Aligned Nations, along with Nasser, Nehru, and Tito. Among his many other titles were "Mouthpiece of the People" and "Father of the Nation," the latter in recognition of his more than twenty-year struggle, interrupted by the Japanese occupation during World War II, to eject the Dutch colonialists from oil-rich Indonesia, the fifth-most-populous country in the world. A Muslim, he had two former wives, Utari and Inggit, and two current wives, Fatmawati and Hartini, when he met Dewi, and he would go on to take two more wives, Harjati and Yurike, while married to her, for a total of seven. "Sukarno also *(Continued on page 132)*

Proud Mary

(Continued from page 123) process new ways to solve problems: "We've gone beyond the stage of simply wanting more women in particular positions. . . . It's much deeper than that and much more fundamental." During a visit to Brown University last fall, Robinson asked, "By focusing our energies as feminists on encouraging women to 'achieve' a more 'significant' role in society, are we not to an extent perpetuating the oppression of women?" When I spoke to her, she rephrased the query only slightly. "If feminists don't value the work of women who stay at home, how is society going to value it?" she asked. "I would be very strongly supportive of men having much involvement in child rearing and homemaking."

The whole country was tuned in when the major TV channel aired a speech Robinson gave recently at Trinity. "In a society where the rights and potential of women are constrained, no man can be truly free," she said. "He may have power, but he will not have freedom.

"Equality between the sexes is seen to be a woman's issue," she said. "It is not. It is said to be a marginal issue. It is not. It is perceived as a threat to the traditional structures of a society and it is not."

The following day she remarked that she was "almost taken aback by the intensity of listening." And no wonder. The nation that listened so carefully to Robinson that evening is, writes philosopher Richard Kearney in *Letters from the New Island,* engaged in "nothing less than a national psychodrama. A play between opposing parts of ourselves—one part that longs for tradition, security, continuity, and another part that wants to come clean, to break the old icons in the name of something different."

"So many Irish are utterly heartbroken and frustrated about their failure to actualize their potential, although they won't admit it," adds the writer John Waters, whose nonfiction best-seller, *Jiving at the Crossroads,* gives a poignant account of stifling small-town Irish life today. What brings them down, Waters tells me, is "begrudgery"—identities and roles that are so firmly fixed at birth that in a town of two thousand, for example, there is such a rigid hierarchy that "I know my place almost to a number—I know how many people are above me and how many below. That's why Irish people go to America and become millionaires. If they stayed in Ireland they'd become alcoholics. . . . Mary's breaching the codes of respectability—she knows that the Irish people are tired of being afraid of their neighbors, and she knows they want to change."

Robinson's whole modus operandi is high-concept, high-symbol. To the Irish, who are used to moving through a society in which behavior often contradicts the rules, she too is communicating against the grain, but often nonverbally or in code. One of her bodyguards is a thirty-year-old woman named Anne Higgins, a high-spirited, pistol-packing—36 Smith & Wesson—blonde who could have stepped out of a James Bond movie. Because the president doesn't like daises—linear and patronizing—they've all but disappeared at official functions, replaced by round tables. And all of Ireland knows that in her kitchen window Mary Robinson keeps a light burning day and night in a vigil for the millions of Irish, most of them educated beyond their country's ability to employ them, who have been forced to emigrate.

Her timing is perfect. "We're the most exciting country in Europe now," says Noel Pearson, the producer of *My Left Foot* and the Abbey Theatre–to–Broadway hit *Dancing at Lughnasa.* The Irish cultural boom encompasses everything from U2 and Sinead O'Connor to films like *The Playboys* and *The Commitments* to Heaney and Durcan. "The chains are off. We're not a part of Britain, we're part of the European Community, and that's the most important thing that's happened in twenty years," Pearson adds. "It's sexy to be Irish in America today—it's fashionable all of a sudden. All this deprivation is over, and Mary Robinson is part of it."

Except for one thing: Ireland's agitation over sex. In February the country confronted the case of a pregnant, fourteen-year-old rape victim—a girl reportedly so uninformed about sex that she had no idea she had even had intercourse until she became pregnant. Irish health professionals concur that such ignorance among the young—the girl apparently did not know the difference between anus and vagina—and even among some adults is not at all unusual. May brought the disclosures about Bishop Casey, one of Ireland's best-known prelates. Revelations of his sexual transgressions have not only unleashed a flood tide of talk about all manner of Irish priests and bishops breaking their vows of celibacy but also undermined the church's moral authority at a crucial moment. But then, church and state in Ireland have always seemed locked in a mad tango. During Ireland's brutal struggle for independence from Britain, with its official Protestant religion, Irish nationalism fused with Catholicism: sexual issues which might otherwise have been open for debate became symbols of national identity. Besides, no matter what horrors occurred, there was always confession.

"As a result of 150 years of severe sexual repression, sex is the key to the Irish political revolution," observes Eoghan Harris. On the eve of the millennium, an entrenched set of laws governs a populace that regularly breaks them with the old nod and the wink. For all intents and purposes abortion is illegal, but incest is fairly widespread. There is no divorce, only a lengthy, complicated process of separation. It wasn't until 1979—thanks in large part to crusades Robinson kicked off—that the Irish legislature legalized contraceptive use for married couples, and then only for "bona fide" family-planning purposes, with a doctor's prescription. Charles Haughey, the health minister at the time, declared the new law "an Irish solution to an Irish problem." Today, condoms can be legally purchased only by those over eighteen, in pharmacies or at approved family-planning clinics.

"If we don't have divorce, we can say marriages don't break down," comments a Dublin psychiatrist who counsels women who have had abortions. "If we don't have abortion, we can say there is no abortion problem; if there's no contraception, we can keep this sexual revolution at bay."

Robinson understands the historical context. "It can't be underestimated—there is a defensiveness, a lack of security about ourselves, that comes from our colonial past," she says, referring to the almost eight hundred years of British rule of Ireland. "Law was foreign law for a very long time," she points out. "So there well may be a certain sense that if the law doesn't comply with your values you can have a law on paper and be doing something else."

But Ireland has twice recently got caught. The more serious of the two scandals is the highly publicized case of the fourteen-year-old girl, allegedly raped by the father of a friend. The girl's parents had taken her to England for an abortion, but were summoned home after they contacted Irish authorities about using fetal tissue as evidence to prove the identity of the father. They were answered with an injunction from the attorney general prohibiting the girl from traveling abroad for an abortion. But her subsequent threats of suicide prompted the Irish Supreme Court to reinterpret the Constitution's "copper-fastened" amendment against abortion, for the first time finding that the right to life of the mother had to be considered. (The girl then went back to England and

had an abortion, as do five thousand other Irishwomen each year.)

The sex scandals have hit as the Irish are being asked to approve the Maastricht Treaty, which would guarantee their full membership in the European Community. Per Ireland's special request, the treaty carried with it a "protocol"—the Irish ban on abortion. Now, in light of the Supreme Court ruling, the ban is no longer the law of the land. Just to complicate things even further, to prevent undue delays the E.C. Council of Ministers refused Ireland permission to amend the offending protocol. What to do about the right to travel for abortion and the right to information about abortion, which are guaranteed by the E.C., but not permitted in Ireland, also needs to be resolved. The situation is explosive and changing daily. In late May the distributors of *The Guardian* opted to withhold an edition carrying an advertisement for a British abortion clinic rather than break the law. "Will access to overseas television stations be restricted if they carry abortion information?" asked an editorial in *The Irish Times*. "Will the radio waves be censored? Will we burn books after we have finished impounding newspapers?"

Both anti- and pro-abortion factions demanded that the law be clarified before the scheduled treaty vote on June 18. But the government of Prime Minister Albert Reynolds refused; the last referendum on abortion, in 1983, was hard-fought, bitter, and divisive. Hanging in the balance are putative billions in E.C. subsidies, not to mention the whole future of Ireland, which for so long has gone along with the church in theory but actually lives by its fabulous oxymorons: the Irish way of coping with unyielding Catholic doctrine, suggests the Dublin psychiatrist, is to view its tenets as "aspirational absolutes."

Mary Robinson chooses to see all this Sturm und Drang as healthy. "There's no good in the new Ireland if it's a bland, blinkered new Ireland," she says. "The new Ireland takes on board the anguish and difficulty of this [rape] case.... There isn't a person who isn't involved, and, in its own way, I think that's very good."

When the case broke Robinson went right up to the edge of her constitutional limit on speaking out. Instinctively, when she chose to intervene, she did not use the familiar legalese or the hollow rhetoric of the back-room and barroom corridors of power. Rather, she said, "I think I am in a very good position to know what hurt, bewilderment, to know of the anxiety, of the sense of frustration, of the sense of helplessness.... We must move on to a more compassionate society.... I hope we have the courage, which we have not always had, to face up to and look squarely and to say this is a problem we have got to resolve."

"These windy politicians, when they open their mouths it's such a pollution of language," says Irish novelist Francis Stuart. "She spoke the language we speak to each other now."

Robinson's statement galvanized the left and startled the right. "It makes what I'm trying to achieve that little bit more difficult," says the chairman of Ireland's Pro-Life Campaign, Senator Des Hanafin. "She'll cause trouble yet. Of that I am certain."

Conflicts like this one have forced Robinson, once referred to as a "smoked-salmon socialist," out from behind the "thicket of the law." "As a lawyer, I held back. It's not good as a lawyer to become emotionally involved with your client," she says. Her baptism of fire was her long campaign in 1990 out in the countryside. "I needed for my own sake to get away from law courts and the practical precision of arguing cases before the courts, of being sure of my facts." Instead she was thrown into "the messier, more untidy world," and switched her influences accordingly. "She's reading poetry now instead of legal briefs," says the Irish politician and poet Michael D. Higgins, who twice served as a Labour Party senator with Robinson. ("Thank God Yeats has been dead for fifty years," she has joked. "Otherwise he might sue me for copyright infringement.") "I remember clearly the transition from a black-haired young woman to a person who had been through the mill, who was the constitutional lawyer gone gray," says Higgins. "She opens herself up to all those areas of hurt she didn't touch as a lawyer, when she was protected by legal formality."

And she is opening Áras an Uachtaráin, her palatial official residence a mile and a half from the center of Dublin, to those who represent some of the country's most intractable problems. Nothing is more painful than the bloody division between the North and South in Ireland, yet Robinson is able to build bridges to the North that others can't. She is a Catholic married to a Protestant, political cartoonist turned lawyer Nicholas Robinson, and she resigned from the Labour Party in 1985 partly because she felt the pro-British faction in the North was not being heard. She is the first president ever to invite Protestant and Catholic housewives from strife-torn Belfast to a get-together at the presidential residence to meet their counterparts from the South.

Before becoming president, Robinson had never been to the grand quarters and gardens of "the Park," where Queen Victoria stayed when she visited Ireland and where Winston Churchill played as a boy. The Robinsons and their three children—Tessa, twenty; William, eighteen; and Aubrey, eleven—were overwhelmed by its grandeur. When they first moved in, Aubrey asked his mother, "Why are we whispering?"

From the moment I land in Ireland I find no one who isn't just wild about Mary—her latest approval rating is 87 percent. Says Seamus Heaney, "There's a sneaking, surprised pride in the electorate that they put her there." Such is their devotion that an Irish soldier was severely reprimanded one day for joking "Big Bird has landed" when Robinson arrived on the scene wearing a yellow suit. "She was just named to the list of the world's best-dressed women, y'know," the customs agent at the airport volunteers. She's Ireland's new philosopher queen and the toast of Dublin, often behaving more royally than that family on the nearby isle. But not so long ago Mary Robinson was definitely uptight. Despite her brilliant career, she had never made it onto any Irish Cabinet or gotten elected to the Dáil, the lower house of deputies, where power resides. She was an ultra-serious, radical constitutional barrister saddled with the distant public personality of a starchy academic. A pickle. "She was wheeled out when there was a debate on a question nobody could understand," says Brenda O'Hanlon, her former campaign coordinator, "definitely not somebody you'd want to go out with at night for a couple of drinks." Childhood friends remember Mary with affection as "popular" but "gauche," "a lump of a girl."

She would wear long, shapeless barrister garb "like reverend mothers," says O'Hanlon. She once had her unraveled skirt hemmed in the back of a cab on the way to the Strasbourg court by one of the women she was representing in a landmark case. The two times she ran for the Dáil "she was a hopeless campaigner," according to Dick Spring, the head of the Labour Party, who later nominated her for the presidency. "In one campaign she breast-fed one of her children [in private] in a working-class district and people were appalled," he says. Spring had disappointed Robinson when he passed her over for the Cabinet post of attorney general in 1984. "It would not have been well received among her peers," he explains. "She wasn't a team player within the parliamentary system. She

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rubbed people the wrong way a lot."

She was known as a technical lawyer with a flair for the micro who combed the codes for injustices that could be righted. Her colleagues claim she stood on haughty principle. "I could never see Mary [defend the accused in] a rape case," says John Rogers, a former attorney general. "Mary is not a person for the gray areas." Nor did she waste any time being chummy with her peers. "You didn't ask her for help," says a younger woman attorney. "She was a prenatal bluestocking," says a man who has known her for years.

Moreover, her shimmering credentials—finishing school in Paris, highest academic honors in law at Trinity, graduate school with honors at Harvard—were an enraging rebuke to male superiority. "Senator, professor, Mary Terese Winifred Robinson," Patrick MacEntee, one of Ireland's most famous legal lights, used to bellow in mockery. "B.A. (Mod.), T.C.D.; LL.M.; etc., etc., etc." In Dublin they still can't get over the fact that she once wore pants in the august Law Library, where barristers headquarter.

Today, "she can practically walk on water," says Spring. But skeptics remain. "I think Mary Robinson, if you knew her well, would give you the biggest pain in the ass you ever had on a person-to-person basis," says a former official of Fianna Fáil, the predominant political party. "But I think she's unbeatable as long as she's there," he concedes. "Perception has become reality."

And in a very short time. "Mary Robinson became president and I got a designer frock," says Nell McCafferty, whose name in Ireland is a virtual synonym for radical feminism. "I gave myself permission—'Fookin' A, she looks good and we can relax now.' I got myself gold earrings, my hair dyed—I got the lot. I went to a nightclub and I had a ball." But isn't Mary Robinson wasted up there in the castle, a woman with her intellectual prowess, unable to speak out? "Nooo," says McCafferty. "She's already laid all the groundwork—she's in a much better position to expand now. Her every speech is reported, the power of her every word is reported. That didn't used to be. She's got power now."

On a brilliant spring afternoon Nicholas Robinson is seated in what was once the ballroom of the British viceroy's residence. Reserved and handsome, bearded and tweedy, he emanates the merest hint of a twinkle as he talks about his wife. He and the former Mary Bourke have known each other since their undergraduate days at Trinity, which was then considered such a Protestant stronghold that she needed special permission from the Catholic archbishop to attend. Currently on leave of absence from the Centre for European Law at Trinity, which he and Robinson co-founded, and chairman of the Irish Architectural Archive, Nick Robinson is exactly what every hard-driving head of state needs: a great wife. "I'm quite happy to simply make the analogy to the countless able women who have put their support behind male political leaders," he says. "If they can do it, why shouldn't a woman expect the same from her husband?"

"I think he is an extraordinary man to have put up with his wife—it's very difficult," adds Robinson. "We are very close friends. I think our friendship is one of the most important things. He's a very emotionally strong man. He's a very secure man. He's a very loving man."

When asked to account for his wife's own strength of character, Nick Robinson says, "Her family background." The five children of Tess and Aubrey Bourke, both doctors, arrived within six years, and Mary, the only girl, was reared no differently from her brothers. "I grew up in an environment of total equality," she marvels. "That was something that my parents never talked about."

"She grew up unquestionably a tomboy," says her brother Henry, a barrister in Galway. "It was 'Fight your own battles and fight them hard or be swallowed.' She learned to take hard knocks and stand up for herself. She certainly whacked me hard." Says her father, "There was one way to hold her own and that was to use her teeth."

It was Mary's fortune to be born third, sandwiched between Aubrey (who died of cancer in 1986) and Oliver, major jocks who became doctors, and Henry and Adrian, major party boys who followed Mary into the law. The younger brothers, especially, were both social and sporty; all five Bourkes were very bright—but Mary was the true intellect.

Although Mary's mother, the late Tess O'Donnell Bourke, of Donegal, gave up medicine when the children arrived, she had a sister who was a doctor. "There was a tradition of professional women in that family," says Nick Robinson. "Most women here are brought up to have no sense of that—men become professionals and women don't. Mary was encouraged at every stage to strive for what she wanted." From an early age she seemed to know what that was. In childhood games, says her brother Henry, Mary often cast herself as Robin Hood. "If we played cowboys and Indians she preferred to be the Indian, the underdog." Henry also remembers her willfulness. She once dragged her two younger brothers, seven and six, on an eight-mile hike to the next town because she so resented her mother's telling the children to get out of the house and go for a walk. "She would argue her point from a young age, more so than any of the boys. She would take our parents on in the nicest possible way," he says.

"She also had the example of hard work in the medical world," adds her father, who has practiced medicine in Ballina for fifty years. "I practiced every day and I didn't take holidays or weekends." Dr. Bourke, known as a "physician to the upper crust," also saw patients who paid with fish or a cart of manure for the garden. "I think she learned from him a great deal about the innate dignity of people," says Nick Robinson, "the capacity to talk to them at the right level."

At the same time, the Bourkes were known as standoffish—the well-to-do, educated family in the plain little town on the river Moy, a famous, unspoiled salmon-fishing mecca in Mayo, one of the westernmost counties (the next stop, they say, is Boston). Dr. Bourke was descended from old landlord stock. The children went to a private school, had a pony named Billy Boy, and played in an enclosed garden across an alley from their large, three-story cinder-block house. "Some people said they had a walled-garden mentality," recalls Loretta Clarke-Murray, who runs a general store in Ballina.

It was the forties and the fifties, and Ireland was in a cultural and political stupor, says Henry. "It was just dead. Nothing moved. You were content with your own. You never looked over the parapet." It took the election of John F. Kennedy in America to wake everyone up. "He came to Ireland and brought us glamour and charm," Henry says in a kind of ironic echo of what the Irish are saying about his sister today. "We suddenly felt we were a people to be reckoned with. Our man had made it to the top," he exclaims. "You could feel the changes from the fifties to the sixties."

Yet in that part of the country there was never any escape from history. The great potato famine in Ireland that began in 1845 is still as fresh as new-sown spuds in many Irish memories. In nearby Westport there still stands a dock where the British landlords stored and shipped corn for ex-

port even while the Irish who had farmed it were dying of starvation.

Mary's model for justice was her grandfather Adrian Bourke, a solicitor in Ballina, who impressed upon her that law "was essentially about justice for the small guy. That may seem very obvious in some circles, but it wasn't that obvious in western Ireland when I was growing up. He was a man of few words, but they were all dense with this sense of law being an instrument of justice and of social change." Yet he was definitely not an iconoclast, she adds. "He was a religious man and a conservative man. But he had a radical sense of what law was about in achieving justice for the individual."

As children, the three younger Bourkes would often wander over to the courthouse "and sit all day in the balcony area looking down at the cases day in and day out," Henry says. "From very early on it was taken Mary would go into the law." She would be given every privilege of education possible, and, to prepare her, sent off to boarding school. Tess Bourke always had big plans for her only daughter. First it was the exclusive Mount Anville in Dublin, run by the "mesdames" of the Sacred Heart. Then Mademoiselle Anita's, a fancy finishing school in Paris, so Mary could get her French.

When Mary came back to attend Trinity with her brothers, Tess went looking for a house for them to share. She found and bought the one Oscar Wilde was born in and installed the children's old nanny to look after them. In the mornings, the nanny would set out glasses of milk at the top of the stairs; all five Bourkes would race down, gulping, and leave the empty glasses on the windowsill as they ran out the door.

Senator David Norris recently commented that Mary's two older brothers went to Trinity "to play Rugby," her younger two "to party," and she alone went to learn. "We took it a bit more casually than she did," says Henry in drastic understatement. One night the boys filled the bathtub with every known liquor, and a visiting American professor passed out in it fully clothed. "I got a letter from Mary once datelined 'Wilde House,' " says Dr. Bourke. "It was meant to worry me, and it did." "The difference between us and Mary," says Henry, "is that she'd come to the party, but if she had a lecture at nine the next morning she'd make it."

After winning practically every academic honor at Trinity, Mary went to Harvard on a scholarship for a year's graduate work to get her master's in law. Harvard in 1967 was a revelation that not only marked her for life but also deepened her belief that the law is essentially an instrument of change. "Law students weren't going to the top law firms on Wall Street, because they were going into federal poverty programs and civil-rights movements in the South and so on," she recalls. "It was the first time I had been challenged by a society openly questioning its values." She stubbornly clung to this outlook and came to call it her "Harvard arrogance."

Once she was back home the personal became political. Mary's parents did not want her to marry a Protestant. "I had to make a choice and fight for my choice," she says. Mary Bourke was convinced Nick Robinson would always be there for her in whatever she undertook. "I remember him presenting me with an orchid when I was going in to do my exams in the Kings Inns [legal society]," she says. "I think he was mocking me but also supporting me with this magnificent orchid. And he was also daring me to wear it—which I did."

> "It's sexy to be Irish in America today. All this deprivation is over, and Robinson is part of it."

"He was always mad about Mary," says the poet Eavan Boland, a close friend. Says Henry, "We should have seen it coming." But they didn't, and when Mary announced her determination to marry Nick, her family did not attend the Dublin wedding. "We rowed among ourselves about it," says Henry. "She was bloody good about it." Mary, who surprised her fellow feminists by taking her husband's name, was given away by a barrister friend.

"At first we were a mixed marriage, her family didn't approve," says Nick Robinson. "But literally within a few weeks everyone was quite happy. It was simply a question of advising her against it, but once done, the situation was immediately accepted, and we've got on ever since."

Even before Mary, friends say, Nick Robinson saw the presidency as a possibility for his wife. "She could never have gotten through the campaign without him," says Brenda O'Hanlon. Or without the savvy Bride Rosney, her closest confidante and political right arm, a former high-school principal who missed her calling as a field marshal. Rosney says that within two months "I knew the presidency was there for the taking."

Robinson had never sought the office, of course, and she was completely unprepared when it was offered. But a photo of her celebrating a Labour victory with unadulterated glee some years before had stuck in the mind of John Rogers, the former attorney general and confidant of Labour head Dick Spring. "You never get good at politics, you know, until you win," says Rogers. Labour wanted to increase its measly 9 percent representation in Parliament, and Robinson was the option who represented excellence, who he knew always went all out whenever she decided to undertake a cause. Rogers called on her at home on Valentine's Day 1990. By then Robinson had left politics altogether and—ahead of the curve, as usual—was a highly successful senior counsel in the burgeoning specialty of European law. Why should she disrupt her practice and her family and go back in to pursue an impossible dream? Winning was out of the question. By the time she had retired from the Senate in 1989, after serving twenty years, politics had soured for her.

" 'That's all very fine, Mary,' " Rogers remembers saying, " 'but you have served before and you will serve again.' There was a point when her face actually collapsed and she was shaken to the core by this idea." She went to the Constitution to read the definition of the job. What persuaded her to run was the part about being the guardian of "the welfare of the people."

Enter Eoghan Harris, a highly controversial master manipulator of TV images who talks like C-SPAN on acid. Unsolicited, he sent Robinson a detailed letter: "My view is that you can win the campaign," he wrote, "by presenting yourself as a democratic rather than a liberal candidate and never as a liberal-left candidate." Later, he followed up with a crucial memo—she was lousy on television and badly needed a warmer image. "Mary must come across as a person who would make a great president. The Dublin 4 subtext question: Why? Because she has the

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brains for it." (Dublin 4, taken from the Zip Code, is the Irish version of the liberal media-lit-pol elite.) "Plain People subtext question: Why? Because she has the beauty for it—she'd make us look good."

He euphemistically told her there must be a "strong feminine factor." Rationalizing that she was going on a job interview for six months, she submitted. Her hair was highlighted, cut, and permed, she wore makeup for the first time, and suddenly you noticed that she had great legs. With her husband at the wheel, she hit the road in a van, blasting Simon and Garfunkel ("Koo-koo-koochoo Mrs. Robinson. . . . Our nation turns its lonely eyes to you"). Such was her sense of dedication that, once, when she discovered she was going to bypass a small pub in order to appear at another down the road, she walked back two miles in the driving rain to be there. When she arrived, she found one customer.

Meanwhile, back in Dublin, where the big boys of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, Ireland's two leading parties, were fielding their own candidates, not enough notice was taken of the woman who wanted to be president. "Nobody in Dublin knew what the hell we were up to," says Brenda O'Hanlon. "Before they realized, it was too late."

In the last days of the campaign, rumors were planted that Nick Robinson was being paid to stay around until the election—the marriage was over. A Fianna Fáil member of Parliament also tried to smear Robinson as having been a neglectful mother. It didn't work. "Mary, I defended your honor on the radio today," a right-wing barrister told her shortly after the smear had hit. Robinson deadpanned, "What was said must have really been appalling for you to defend *my* honor."

Meanwhile, the honor of the leading candidate, Cabinet minister Brian Lenihan of Fianna Fáil, was besmirched by reports that he had allegedly attempted to inappropriately influence the president. Lenihan was unceremoniously sacked from the Cabinet. "So here you were, offering a presidential candidate to the people who was not fit to be a minister," says pro-life senator Des Hanafin (who was recently expelled from Fianna Fáil because he refused to support Maastricht). Such are the paradoxes of Irish politics, however, that for a short time it appeared Lenihan would actually be swept into office on a sympathy vote. But in the end the old politics-as-usual proved unacceptable—to Irish women, in particular. Mary Robinson ascended. She had taken a leap, and so had they.

Robinson's activist presidency has marked a moment of redefinition in the soul of Ireland. "She managed to break with the stereotype of Mother Ireland as dispossessed, weak, forlorn, lachrymose, who calls upon her sons to sacrifice themselves through blood sacrifice so Mother Ireland can be redeemed again," says the philosopher Richard Kearney, who helped Robinson with her inaugural address. As a result largely of British colonization, "that was the curious personification of Ireland—the mother calling her sons to die. She was passive, she didn't intervene. She was a ravished, dispossessed woman."

But not anymore. "With Mary Robinson," says Kearney, "we're into a revision and a whole reimagining of Ireland as a sister, as a modern woman." Hail Mary. □

Dewi Sukarno

(Continued from page 127) engaged in a lifelong series of liaisons with Dutch, Russian, American, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican women, among many others," according to an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* entry. As "the Rampant Lion of Asia" himself once said, "Yes, yes, yes, I love women."

"For me, he was like a god, and I was like a maiden in a shrine or a temple," Madame Sukarno explained when I interviewed her this spring in New York. She was sitting on a plum sofa in the green living room of her one-bedroom pied-à-terre on an upper floor of the Ritz Tower. She was wearing a black-and-white silk suit by Japanese designer Yuki Yao and chic purple pumps. In one corner were two chrome-and-glass bookcases filled with framed photographs of the late president of Indonesia and Madame Sukarno receiving such dignitaries as Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Princess Monique of Cambodia at the presidential palace in Djakarta. There were also more recent snapshots, including one of Madame Sukarno in Islamabad with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan shortly before she left office, and another of Madame Sukarno, Madame Marcos, and former queen Farah Diba of Iran, three exiled widows from the East dining in an East Side restaurant.

"It did not matter if he was married before, if he still had other wives," Madame Sukarno continued. "If I would compare his lifework, his state work, with building a monument, I would be very happy to be just one of the stones in the foundation. I would say that he deserved more women than he ever had, he was such a great man. I wouldn't be jealous."

According to Madame Sukarno, they were formally introduced at a tea party in the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo on June 16, 1959, but she reportedly had caught his eye the night before, when she sang his favorite Indonesian folk song at the high-priced Copacabana nightclub. She was about nineteen at the time, a struggling actress/model/artist/singer/bar hostess who worked part-time at the Copacabana to support her impoverished mother and younger brother and to pay for her acting classes at the drama school run by the renowned actor Sessue Hayakawa, according to her 1978 autobiography, *The Flame of the Hibiscus*. Her Japanese name was Naoko Nemoto. Later, in Indonesia, it was changed to Ratna Sari Dewi, which means Goddess of the Essence of Jewels.

"Some hostesses at the Copacabana, which was one of only three international-standard nightclubs in Tokyo at that time, were available to take out after the club closed," a knowledgeable Tokyo source says. "But in her book Madame Sukarno insists that she never did this. She wrote that she served drinks and snacks and sometimes she sang when asked."

President Sukarno, then fifty-eight, had been brought to the Copacabana by a Japanese businessman named Masao Kubo, the late president-director of Tonichi Trading Company, which chartered ships to take Indonesian Muslims to Mecca, among other businesses. Masao Kubo's right-hand man, who is mysteriously referred to by a code name in *The Flame of the Hibiscus*, was a close friend of young Dewi, or Naoko; he had arranged for her to sing for Sukarno at the Copacabana, and he conveyed the presidential invitation to tea the next day at the Imperial Hotel. Two months later, he delivered a letter from Sukarno, inviting Naoko for a two-week visit to Indonesia. Madame Sukarno showed me that letter, one of hundreds he eventually wrote her, which she keeps in a safe in a New York bank.

Kubo's right-hand man accompanied Naoko on this trip, her first outside Japan. According to the Indonesian newsweekly

Tempo, before Naoko Nemoto left for Djakarta, Masao Kubo offered her five million yen in cash (about $14,000), a house in Tokyo's prime Setagaya district worth another five million yen, and a 200,000-yen-a-month allowance in exchange for "looking for opportunities for Tonichi Trading Company in Indonesia."

A year earlier, the rival Kinoshita Trading Company had introduced President Sukarno to another attractive young Japanese woman, Sakiko Kanase, and had installed her in Indonesia as his mistress—and its agent. Sakiko Kanase had previously been a hostess at another swanky Tokyo nightclub, Benibasha, where Naoko Nemoto had also worked before moving on to the Copacabana. Apparently, Naoko and Sakiko were as competitive as the trading companies behind them.

At the end of Naoko's planned stay in Indonesia, Sukarno took her to his palace in Bali. As they watched the sun set over the Indian Ocean, he asked her, "Would you be my inspiration? Would you be my strength? Would you please be the joy of my life?" She accepted.

A few days later, Sakiko Kanase killed herself, by slashing her legs with a razor blade. Exactly one month after her death, on November 3, 1959, President Sukarno and Naoko Nemoto, renamed Ratna Sari Dewi, "promised to be husband and wife" in a small, unofficial ceremony in the Djakarta palace. Not long after that, Tonichi Trading Company was awarded contracts to take part in the construction of the Hotel Indonesia in Djakarta and the Ambarrukumo Palace hotel in Jogjakarta, which were financed from the $223 million in war reparations that the Japanese government had agreed in 1958 to pay for development projects in Indonesia.

But Dewi's struggles were far from over. On February 4, 1962, her mother, Masako, who had never approved of Dewi's Islamic-style "temporary marriage," died in Tokyo. "I still have a guilty conscience about my mother's death," Madame Sukarno told me. "She was very old-school Japanese, and it was very hard for her to accept the idea of her daughter going to live in a foreign country and marrying a foreigner." Two days later, on February 6, her brother, Yasoo, a student at Waseda University, gassed himself to death in his Tokyo apartment. "That was my twenty-second birthday," she wrote in her autobiography. On her twenty-third birthday, Sukarno gave her a mansion of her own in Djakarta's nicest suburb, which she filled with Oriental bric-a-brac and crystal chandeliers and named the House of Yasoo, in honor of her brother. On March 3, 1963, Sukarno officially married Dewi.

Still she struggled and chafed. For one thing, her marriage was not made public for some time. "She was being kept a deep, dark secret. He didn't want people to know he had a foreign wife," says Cindy Adams, who was in Indonesia then, writing *Sukarno: An Autobiography, As Told to Cindy Adams*. For another, there was the "harem" to contend with. Fatmawati lived in another suburb and considered herself *the* First Lady, even though the president didn't visit her much anymore. Dewi's greatest rival was Hartini, who lived in Bogor, a mountain resort, where the president joined her on weekends. Harjati, whom Sukarno married in 1964, was about the same age as Dewi, and was kept in Bali. Nobody seems to know where the teenage Yurike, whom Sukarno married in 1965, was quartered. Nor is it certain which wife he divorced in order to respect the Islamic limit of only four wives at one time.

"There was an *enormous* jealousy," Cindy Adams says. "There's this idea that it's easy for a Muslim man to have four wives. It's not. And Dewi, clearly being the most beautiful of them all, the most international of them all, cut a very wide swath. When she walked into a room, the whispering would start. She was an anomaly.... But *he* adored her. He was *crazed* about her."

"I really have been spoiled by my husband's love," Madame Sukarno told me. "He was a man who reminded me every day, every hour, every second, that he loved me. Even at a Cabinet meeting, he would pull a rose from the vase on the table and tear a piece of memo paper and write, 'I'm with all the ministers, but my heart is with you.' In the morning, when I was combing my hair, he would say, 'My love is longer than your hair.' "

The fifth Mrs. Sukarno began to act like a real First Lady about a year after her official marriage. She stood beside the president when he received Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, and she accompanied him on state visits to Brazil, Italy, and France, where she was said to have enchanted General de Gaulle almost as much as Jacqueline Kennedy had. But her power period was brief.

General Suharto deposed President Sukarno as effective ruler of Indonesia on March 11, 1966, following an attempted Communist coup, a military countercoup, and six months of violent turmoil—at least 300,000 people were killed—during which time Dewi worked hard to charm the two tough men into a power-sharing compromise. She played golf with General Suharto, she played bridge with the American ambassador, she persuaded Sukarno to invite Suharto for dinner, but to no avail. Sukarno was allowed to keep the title of president for two more years, but his regime was finished.

In November 1966, Dewi Sukarno, five months pregnant, flew to Tokyo, where her only child was born on March 7, 1967. She named her Kartika Sari—it means Essence of Stars—and asked the Count de Beaumont (the father of Jacqueline de Ribes) and Cindy Adams to be the godparents. In September 1967, after articles in the Japanese press accusing Sukarno of corruption led to a demonstration by sword-bearing rightists outside her house, she left Tokyo for Paris. A few months earlier, Sukarno had been placed under house arrest in Djakarta, and communication with him became increasingly difficult. Dewi hadn't heard from him in months, she said, when an A.P. reporter called her in Paris, in June 1970, and told her he was close to death.

Against all advice, she flew to Djakarta with her three-year-old daughter and her Japanese nanny. In Singapore, where she changed planes, an attaché from the Indonesian Embassy warned her that her security could not be guaranteed in Djakarta. But she was also handed a message in Singapore, from "a Japanese friend," she said, which gave her courage. It read, "Please never forget under any circumstances that you are a Japanese lady."

"That became my bible of how to behave in Indonesia," she told me. "I said, 'O.K., if I'm going to be killed, I will be killed very proudly, with dignity. And, God help me, if I am to be killed, give me a few seconds to kill my daughter.' I couldn't *think* that my daughter would survive in *their* hands."

Sukarno was in a coma when she arrived at the military hospital in the middle of the night, and the next morning, when she returned, he was dead. "This is when I saw his other wife for the first time in my life," she said softly, adding in a near whisper, "Hartini." The fallen leader's funeral was attended by more than half a million people, including his former wife Inggit, then eighty-three, Fatmawati, Hartini, Dewi, and their eight children.

"She was a woman who had every door in Paris open to her when she first arrived," says an important Rive Gauche hostess, São Schlumberger. "Because the French love an exotic beauty. And she was *very* beautiful, very

soignée—she had great style. But she couldn't handle it."

Shortly after she moved to Paris from Tokyo in late 1967, Madame Sukarno took a five-room apartment on fashionable Avenue Montaigne, in the same building in which Marlene Dietrich and the Qatari ambassador lived. There were rumors that Sukarno had stashed away several million dollars in a Swiss bank account for her, but she denied this, telling journalists that she had left Indonesia with "six maternity dresses and two pairs of false eyelashes." In Japan, she explained, her husband's supporters had taken up a collection for her, and she was living off the interest.

She was fêted by President Georges Pompidou, the Aga Khan, Baron Guy and Baroness Marie-Hélène de Rothschild, Baron Edmond and Baroness Nadine de Rothschild, the Princess de Polignac, and the Viscountess de Ribes. She was dressed in haute couture by Pierre Cardin, Marc Bohan of Dior, and Valentino in Rome. She became a favorite of *Paris Match* and French *Vogue,* and was photographed at all the right parties and in all the right resorts—Capri, Saint-Tropez, Gstaad, Baden-Baden—often on the arm of a Mr. Right, such as Lord Patrick Lichfield or Prince Vittorio Massimo. She was also said to be seeing Pakistani prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Benazir's father, when he visited Paris.

For a stretch in the early seventies, she was engaged to a handsome young Spaniard, Francisco Paesa, and lived with him in a lakefront house near Geneva. They started a private bank together, registered in Lugano. She also worked on her autobiography and wrote a column "on the difference between the Occidental and Oriental mentalities, in love, in marriage, in customs," for a Japanese women's magazine. But her relationship with Paesa "didn't work out," she told me. "I lost the house, and I lost the bank."

She was soon back on the Paris-London-Rome social circuit with a succession of glamorous swains and escorts, including Guy Burgos, John Bentley, Juan March, Fabio Testi, Patrice Calmettes, and assorted young Saudi princes.

"As I met one, there was another one on the horizon," Cindy Adams says. "One time in her Paris apartment, we were going through the list of the many men and wondering which one she should marry. One had a great title, but he was aged. Another had no title, but he was young. Another was young, had a title, but also had a wife. We were ticking them off, and we decided that there weren't that many Onassises around."

She seemed to be searching for a *handsome* Onassis. And she was developing a reputation for her jealousy fits. Baroness Hélène de Ludinghausen vividly remembers a night about twenty years ago at Le Privé, the discotheque owned by French tennis star Jean-Noël Grinda. She was sitting with Manuel de Miranda, a young coffee king from El Salvador whom Madame Sukarno dated for a while. "First she threw a bucket of ice all over us. Then she scratched his face, until she drew blood. It was totally ridiculous. He was someone I'd known all my life, and there was nothing going on between us."

Manuel de Miranda, reached at his El Salvador coffee plantation, corroborated this story. He said that he had "broken up" with Madame Sukarno the night before, and that after she doused them with ice *and* champagne "Hélène and I got up to dance, and everyone clapped for us, because we were so 'brave.' Then Dewi scratched me at the door as we were leaving. She had very long nails, and I was bleeding. I went to a doctor immediately. Fortunately, it didn't leave scars."

A titled Scandinavian told me about another night at Le Privé in the mid-seventies. "Dewi went across the dance floor to where the Duke de Sabran was sitting with another woman, and she dumped a bucket of ice over his head." A social South American described another scene with the Duke de Sabran, around 1980, at Castel's. "He was sitting at the table next to me with Beatrice Barclay, one of the eight wives of Eddie Barclay—I think the third or fourth. And suddenly Dewi Sukarno arrived, and she took a bucket or a bottle—it all happened very quickly, but I know it was definitely bigger than a glass—and she threw it all over them."

Duke Elzear de Sabran-Pontevés was the grand *amour* of Dewi Sukarno's Paris years. He had all the prerequisites on the list she'd made with Cindy Adams. Youth—he was thirty-five when they met in 1972. A title—one of the oldest and most important in Provence. No wife—though his sister was married to the Duke d'Orléans, the son of the Count of Paris, pretender to the French throne.

A prominent Paris woman sums up their relationship: "He's nice, good-looking, good in bed; he has a very good name. So women think he's a very good catch. He's not. He's a womanizer. . . . Her hope, her dream, was to marry him, to be the Princess de Sabran. That's the one thing he couldn't do to his family. His mother would have died. And he adores his mother."

The Dewi Sukarno story that Paris wits love to tell is about the time the Duke de Sabran took her home to meet his mother, a distinguished Catholic lady who wore her gray hair in a bun and absolutely no makeup. As they toured the family's thousand-year-old Château de Ansouis, near Aix-en-Provence, Dewi sounded off about how she would rearrange the heirloom furniture and rehang the ancestral portraits. At the end of the tour the old duchess, having listened in silence, is said to have uttered three words: "I'm still here."

"It's not right to say that my family did not like Dewi," the Duke de Sabran said, sitting in the Boulevard Haussmann apartment from which he runs his latest business, marketing vacuum-packed gourmet meals under the brand name France Gastronomie. "My family, even my mother, was amused by her. I don't think they wanted me to marry her, but they found her interesting as my friend." In any case, the duke said, he wasn't ready to marry then, and at fifty-five he's still not. "I would like to have children, but every year I think, Another year of freedom."

When I'd called for an appointment, I'd asked him if he had been surprised by the news from Aspen. "No, because when she was with me she was a very violent woman—which is charming. She has a short temper, but a big heart. She's a woman for men. That's why, perhaps, she sees other women as competition." In his office, I asked him to elaborate. "I like this short temper," he said. "Other women say things behind the back, but she says it to the face. In society, however, you must be more of a hypocrite, and, unfortunately, she is not a hypocrite. . . . The smallest compromise makes her hysteric. . . . She is like a cat, a tiger. You'll never be bored with her. . . . I have beautiful memories of Dewi. I respect her. I like her violence. I can be violent, too."

What exactly did he mean by "violence"?

"You know, I was in love, she was in love. When you have this passion, you can hurt each other. . . . If you hurt her, for her you deserve to die."

"She fought with every woman in Paris because of Sabran," a man-about-Europe says, citing Princess Ira von Furstenberg, the Duchess de La Rochefoucauld, the Duchess of Bedford, and Lynn Wyatt. "But the truth is, he is a man who cannot say no to any woman. Even a poor woman. He's a real Casanova."

One night in the mid-seventies, the

Duchess de La Rochefoucauld gave a dinner party at her apartment on the Avenue Montaigne, just down the street from Madame Sukarno's place. She invited the Duke de Sabran but not Madame Sukarno. Princess de Polignac, who left the party around midnight, was stunned to find Dewi "waiting in the lobby, looking miserable. She asked me, 'Is Elzear still there? Is he flirting with Ira von Furstenberg?' "

A chauffeur who was waiting outside the building that night witnessed this scene: "Madame Sukarno was hiding behind a Citroën truck, just near the Duchess de La Rochefoucauld's door. She was wearing an evening gown, a very light color. She was standing with a gun in her hand, a 6.35-mm. revolver—it's very small, a woman's revolver—looking straight at the door. And then a guest, a man, came down and saw her and said, 'What are you doing here?' She was discovered, and she left. She was screaming, almost to herself, 'Son of a bitch!' "

"*My grandfather* President Sergio Osmeña landed with General MacArthur," Victoria Maria Osmeña, known as Minnie, was telling me on the telephone. "*My father,* Senator Sergio Osmeña Jr., ran for president against Marcos in 1969, and after this martial law was declared. My father contested the results, and was hand-grenaded at a political rally and left an invalid for the rest of his life. *My brother,* Sergio Osmeña III, was put in jail together with a lot of members of my family, as political prisoners. They went on a hunger strike, and *I* negotiated with the Marcos regime. Then I went to the U.S. on a political mission—my father was already in exile there—and when I didn't come back, Marcos kept my children as political hostages for eighteen months. . . . I was married to a prominent political figure. The first wedding gown Yves Saint Laurent did after he left the House of Dior was *my* wedding gown."

A few days later, Minnie Osmeña flew from *her* Ritz Tower apartment in New York to *her* Avenue Montaigne apartment in Paris, on her way to a "Bop Till You Drop" bash in Gstaad. We met for tea in the busy lobby of the Plaza Athénée hotel. She wore a moss-green jacket and matching leggings, under a Dior sable coat with a diamond-eyed gold owl pinned on the lapel. Seven weeks after her face had been cut in Aspen, there was a faint little scar just above her left eyebrow, an infinitesimal one on the edge of her left eyelid, perilously close to the eye itself, and a one-inch-square Band-Aid on her left cheek covering the largest wound.

She picked up her autobiographical monologue where she'd left off: "In the 1986 election, there were three major tickets for president and vice president: Marcos-Tolentino, Aquino-Salonga, and Laurel-Osmeña. *I* was the Osmeña. Cory Aquino didn't have much chance of winning with her party, so we convinced her to join our party. And Laurel stepped down to vice president on her ticket, and I stepped down to campaign manager of Cebu Province. . . . I started in politics when I was twelve years old, campaigning with my father, because my mother hated politics. So *I* used to crown the little princesses in the barrios' fiestas."

Minnie Osmeña's mother was born into the de la Rama shipping family. Several sources in the Philippines say that Amelia de la Rama, a socialite and actress who had been married to a cousin of Minnie's mother, was a paramour of President Sukarno's. Minnie Osmeña told me, "My father introduced Amelia to Sukarno. Sukarno used to be our guest in the Philippines. He asked my father to give her $200,000, and then he repaid my father." I asked Osmeña if she was suggesting that this may have been what set Dewi Sukarno against her in Aspen. She nodded yes.

> "For me, Sukarno was like a god, and I was like a maiden in a shrine."

Madame Sukarno claims that she never had any reason to be jealous of Amelia de la Rama. "When I came to America in 1967, I passed Hawaii, and she was the first person to welcome me in Honolulu. Amelia also helped Minnie in Hawaii, when she left the Philippines. . . . And Minnie had a falling-out with Amelia."

Amelia de la Rama, reached at her house in Baguio, the Philippines, told me, "I introduced President Sukarno to Minnie's father, *not* the other way around." She added, "If the president is going to make a present, it's not going to be a mere $200,000. I don't know anything about that." She confirmed that she had received both Dewi and Minnie in Honolulu, but said that she no longer sees Minnie. "Minnie was always calling me wherever she was, and then she married that Carnation heir, and she stopped calling me. . . . You know, some people, no matter how much money or fame or glory they have, don't have peace of mind. Minnie seems that way. I don't know why."

Minnie Osmeña entered Dewi Sukarno's life in Paris in 1974, when the former First Lady was seeing less of the Marie-Hélène de Rothschild set and more of another exotic exile who hadn't played her social cards quite right, Soraya, the ex-wife of the Shah of Iran. Minnie Osmeña and Dewi Sukarno were introduced by Kumiko Terakita, a Japanese woman who lived in the same building as Dewi and who was a close friend of Minnie's first father-in-law.

Minnie Osmeña had been married twice in the Philippines: to steel heir Joselito Jacinto, in a 1964 wedding attended by 3,500 guests, and then to mining heir Jess Cabarrus. Both marriages were annulled, because there is no divorce in the Philippines. She has two children from her first marriage, now both in their mid-twenties: Paolo, a Princeton graduate, and Stephanie, a graduate student at New York University. Osmeña left the Philippines in the early seventies and turned up on the Manhattan–Fire Island disco scene, sometimes with Egon von Furstenberg, more often with decorator Pierre Scapula. She took a one-year "mid-career" program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, earning a master's degree in public administration. In 1978 she worked at Citibank in New York as a financial-futures broker. She also worked at Conti Commodities, a subsidiary of Continental Grain.

In about 1983 she married her third husband, evaporated-milk scion Dwight Stuart, who was more than twenty years older than she and had been divorced three times. He lived in Beverly Hills and had a private jet. In 1984, while undergoing alcohol-detoxification treatment, he decided to sell his shares of the family business, Carnation Company, precipitating a $3 billion buyout by Nestlé. According to the Forbes Four Hundred list, the Stuart family is worth about $800 million. During their nine-year marriage, Stuart gave Minnie the Ritz Tower apartment, a second Park Avenue apartment ("for entertaining," says a friend), and the Paris apartment, as well as jewelry, art, and an-

nual payments reportedly totaling about $11 million in cash. When they divorced last year, she told me, she "sold" him their Beverly Hills house and her half-interest in their Palm Springs house. According to friends, she also received another $8 million in cash. She refused to confirm this figure, and noted that she gets "no alimony."

"She was definitely on a capital-assets acquisition program," says one of the friends with whom she shared her marital and financial secrets. These friends say that Minnie Osmeña has a saying when it comes to men. "She calls it 'The two *B*s.' One is the body, and the other is the bankroll. She says, 'They either have one or the other; anything else doesn't matter.' "

"She talks about her money all the time," another chum says. "I don't know why, but she has this thirst, this get-out-of-my-way attitude. She has to be first. She doesn't like any competition. It's sad, is what it is."

When Minnie Osmeña met Dewi Sukarno back in 1974, however, "money she had not," according to Cindy Adams, who is backed up by other, less partial sources. "Dewi took her under her wing. She seems to remember loaning Minnie some couture clothes for parties."

Osmeña angrily denies that she borrowed clothes from Sukarno. "She says that we're the same size. We're *not*. I'm five foot five, and she's five foot *one!*" Sukarno says, "I'm five foot two, close to three. I thought *she* was shorter than *me*."

Osmeña also rejects the widespread perception that she is basking in her sudden fame, despite the fact that she has given interviews to several New York and Manila columnists and posed in her bandages for *People* magazine. She denies the allegation that she offered $30,000 to the Paris-based jet-set glossy *The Best in the World* to put her on the cover. "*She* called Cindy Adams," Osmeña hisses about you-know-who. "*She* hired a P.R. firm, *not* me. *She* spread all these statements saying I'm a social climber. . . . I never felt I had to prove anything to anybody. Except now I feel I have to prove my credibility, because *she* is making it look like a brawl, which taints *me*."

Osmeña insists that she and Madame Sukarno have never been anything more than passing acquaintances. She points out that she didn't get her Paris apartment until three years after Sukarno rented hers out and moved back to Indonesia in 1982, and that Sukarno didn't buy her Ritz Tower apartment until last year—for $280,000. "The *only* time I had dinner *alone* with her *in my life* was last June," Osmeña says. "She wanted to talk to me about the Ritz Tower, so we went to the Japanese restaurant downstairs. She had already put a deposit on another apartment in another building, and I told her that the Ritz Tower was the best if you're only using it sometime."

Dewi Sukarno has spent most of the last ten years in Indonesia, running a consulting company called P. T. Imcor, which she says represents major American, Japanese, and European construction companies. Shortly after her return, the press reported that she was suing her former secretary, whom she accused of having absconded with property that she had temporarily signed over to her when she left the country, including antiques, a marble company, and the local Toyota dealership. Indonesian sources say that at one point Madame Sukarno was very close to General Suharto's influential half-brother. Three years ago, she moved into a palatial house, where she has given poolside parties for Julio Iglesias and Zubin Mehta.

All during this period, she made several trips a year to New York and Paris. Social sources in both cities say that Dewi Sukarno and Minnie Osmeña saw much more of each other than either woman may now care to remember.

A New York pal of Osmeña's: "I think the resentment is between two very prominent, wealthy Asians on the scene. They used to be very friendly, going to the same parties, calling each other up." What happened? "Minnie seems to have this streak of envy. I used to tell her, 'Minnie, you should be *so happy*—stop being envious. You're smart, you're good-looking, you're witty, you're from a good family.' . . . Even people who *want* to be friends with her wonder, Hey, what did I do wrong?"

A Paris friend of both women: "They've been good friends for a long time, and then suddenly, when Dewi decided to live in New York, Minnie became jealous, I think. They're tough cookies. No pity, either one of them. If what happened to Minnie had happened to Dewi, she would do the same thing that Minnie is doing to her. She's like an atomic bomb—well, they're both like atomic bombs; when you go out in the evening, you don't know when the bomb will go off. Which doesn't mean they're unpleasant. It's a good match: two champions of the night, two socialite heavyweights."

Everyone—even Dewi Sukarno and Minnie Osmeña—agrees that things took a turn for the worse last August on the Spanish island of Ibiza. A mutual friend, Massimo Gargia, the publisher of *The Best*, was promoting a development of luxury villas and had invited several celebrities, including actress Linda Christian, starlet Francesca Dellera, and Dewi Sukarno. According to Gargia, Minnie Osmeña called and told him that Dewi had suggested she join them, but when he checked with Dewi, she said she'd leave if Minnie came, and he had to persuade her to stay. "From the first night Minnie arrived," he said, "there were problems. She wanted to go to dinner in the same car as Dewi. She said, 'Why is her car bigger?' She wanted to be in the same house as Dewi, because it was more luxurious. . . . She always had to be at the same table as Dewi, only to attack her. Whatever Dewi said, she said the contrary. She went around saying that Dewi was sixty and was completely remade. . . . She said Sukarno never married Dewi, that she was a whore. . . . One night she said to Dewi, 'Why are you overdressed? To make the rest of us look poor?' It was terrible. She hates Dewi, and at the same time she follows her wherever she goes. I think she wants to be like Dewi, because she never arrived at the celebrity of Dewi. . . . They look alike, they dress alike, they could be sisters. . . . After two days Dewi left, because she couldn't take it anymore. . . . Minnie asked me where she was going. She was going to Saint-Tropez on the private plane of a rich Italian industrialist, and she told him not to bring Minnie."

Two days before Dewi Sukarno's departure, several Ibiza sources recounted, she and Minnie Osmeña had a fight on the yacht of the Marquis de Campoflorido. Madame Sukarno told me that she had been sitting alone with Minnie Osmeña in the main cabin when they got into a discussion about Imelda Marcos—a friend of Sukarno's, but not, understandably, Osmeña's favorite Filipina. Madame Sukarno said, "She insisted that Mrs. Marcos would be killed if she returned to the Philippines, and I asked her, 'How can you be so certain? Have you financed the assassins? How can you talk about such matters without knowing anything about them? What is your background in politics, your experience?' She told me that she was going to run for vice president in the Philippines. I said, 'How frightening for the world that a little girl like you could do such a thing.' She became very upset and said terrible things to me, so I left the cabin. And she followed me out to the deck and started screaming at me in front of everyone."

"La Osmeña started it all," said the

Dewi Sukarno

Marquise de Campoflorido. "She called Señora Sukarno a waitress and said she was working in a cafeteria, a bar, when she met President Sukarno. It was very disagreeable."

"She belittled me," Minnie Osmeña countered. "We had an argument because she started discussing Philippine politics, which she doesn't know very much about. She became very personal. She made a public confrontation out of it. I don't like public confrontations, so the way I dealt with it was to avoid her ever since. I stopped talking to her, that's all I did. I snubbed her."

"Mrs. Sukarno put on her lipstick, powdered her face...picked up her wineglass, and walked over to where Minnie was," said a woman who was at the Aspen Club Lodge and saw what the Sukarno side calls "the accident" and the Osmeña side calls "the attack."

Tension had been building all through the holiday week in America's most socially overheated ski resort as Dewi Sukarno and Minnie Osmeña found themselves at the same parties night after night—at the Caribou Club, at David Koch's on New Year's Eve, at the $150,000 champagne-and-beluga bash Adnan Khashoggi threw on New Year's Day.

At each of those parties, according to Dewi Sukarno, Minnie Osmeña was talking about her. "It was constant. I felt so humiliated. Even if I didn't hear the words, I could see the face of the people she was whispering to, and their little smiles as they looked at me."

"During our various social outings, Mrs. Osmeña steered away discreetly," an Osmeña friend, Kalliope Karella, told the Aspen police. "At Adnan Khashoggi's dinner, when there was a possibility of sharing a table with Mrs. Sukarno due to lack of dining space, Mrs. Osmeña clearly expressed the desire not to do so."

The following night, at the Aspen Club Lodge, Minnie Osmeña exchanged words with Dewi Sukarno's friend Victoria Seteny, and Dewi Sukarno exchanged words with Minnie Osmeña's friend Lee Keating. And then it happened.

"I felt a tug on my right arm, so I turned my face," Osmeña told me. "And when I looked at Dewi, I already saw her hand coming down at me toward my face. I think she broke the glass on my face, because she left a two-inch shard of glass in my face. There was so much blood all over my eye and face and cheek that one of my friends fainted."

"Madame Sukarno's position is that it was an accident," a supporter of hers said. "She says that Minnie Osmeña grabbed her by the wrist as she was holding the champagne glass. Madame Sukarno tried to pull away, and Minnie Osmeña pulled her in the other direction. They went back and forth, and evidently somebody lost their grip, and the glass flew back into Minnie Osmeña's cheek, resulting in a very serious gash. Madame Sukarno says that nobody saw the actual incident. They were in a dark corner, just the two of them."

Dewi Sukarno is pleading not guilty to second-degree assault, which carries a mandatory minimum sentence of five years if she is convicted as charged. The prosecution has at least six witnesses, including a German prince and a nephew of a former Colombian president, prepared to repeat what they told the Aspen police the night of or the morning after the alleged crime: that they saw Dewi Sukarno "attack," "hit," or "smash" Minnie Osmeña's face with a glass.

Sukarno has one of the strongest defense lawyers in America working for her, and Barry Slotnick, true to form, promises "a big surprise" at the trial, which is scheduled to last at least two weeks, starting August 12. But Minnie Osmeña has also hired a tough attorney to pursue her $10 million civil suit, Buddy Monasch, who has litigated on behalf of Saul Steinberg, David Merrick, and Stan Getz.

In March, Slotnick filed Sukarno's $10-million-plus countersuit, and in April, Pitkin County prosecutors charged Sukarno's private investigators, Beau Dietl and Associates, with harassing witnesses in Aspen and having a photographer tail Minnie Osmeña in New York. Judge J. E. DeVilbiss refused the requests for a restraining order. "Yes, we did take photographs," Slotnick told me, "which she voluntarily posed for." Minnie Osmeña told me that she became paranoid after the thirtieth or fortieth shot. I also spoke to a New York photographer, David McGough, who had been contacted by Madame Sukarno. "She wanted us to follow a small, well-dressed, affluent-looking Asian woman who lived in the Ritz Tower, so I sent an associate, and he saw this rich-looking Asian woman getting into a limousine outside the Ritz Tower. He followed her to Le Cirque and took some pictures. But when we sent them to Madame Sukarno, she refused to pay us, because they were pictures of *her*."

Over tea at the Mayfair hotel late this spring, Madame Sukarno, accompanied by her publicist, Bob Brody, Barry Slotnick, and his partner, Mark Baker, told me she was planning to spend July in Aspen, "white-river rafting, horseback riding, camping out, trout fishing, hiking, and playing golf. And I'm helping the Aspen Music Festival. I'm bringing Balinese dancers.... I love Aspen." She said she wasn't worried about the outcome of the trial. "Not even for one second. Because my conscience is very good. I didn't do it."

I asked one of her closest friends if she was less confident in private, if the tensions of her conflict with Minnie Osmeña had ever driven her to tears.

His answer was "Dewi doesn't cry." □

King Rap

(Continued from page 118) if you don't like it, I'll hit you in the head with a baseball bat. Fuck you.' Not 'I don't want gold, I don't want a car. I want to be a bum.' It ain't that. That's for rock stars. It's a very opposite thing."

At the time, rap seemed almost like a novelty. "People thought these were gimmicks, for sure," says Simmons. "I had no idea there'd be an industry for it. Nobody could have predicted that." Despite his doubts about the future, Simmons was definitely ambitious. "He was extremely energetic," says Nelson George, who wrote about the scene for *The Village Voice*. "Russell was a wild man. He used to say he wanted to be Berry Gordy. That was all he talked about."

It was a full-time job—Simmons was barely going to school. Instead, he was out promoting his records, putting on shows. "My father had a poem about me," he says. " 'Eat, sleep, don't shovel no snow / Get up, get dressed, go disco.' " Simmons smiles. "It was true."

In 1983, Simmons met Rick Rubin, an undergraduate at N.Y.U. Rubin came from an upper-middle-class Long Island family and sported waist-length hair and an equally long ZZ Top–style beard. "He

looked satanic," says George, echoing a common impression. "Rick always wore a black overcoat and dark wraparound sunglasses and he looked like the Devil."

Growing up, Rubin had been a huge fan of heavy metal and then had played in some punk bands (including D.J.-ing for one called the Young and the Useless, which included the future members of the Beastie Boys). At N.Y.U., he had recently discovered rap and was obsessed with the scene. As a lark, he decided to put out a rap record. His first twelve-inch single, "It's Yours," by T La Rock and Jazzy Jay, was a local dance hit.

Rubin put the single out on Def ("cool") Jam ("music"), the newly started record label he was running out of Weinstein, his dorm. "The clerk at the front desk handled all the shipping," Rubin recalls. "It was also our warehouse. We had thousands of records in boxes and they'd all be in the back of the school."

Simmons was awed by "It's Yours." "He told me that I had made his favorite rap record," Rubin says. "He couldn't believe that I was white." The two started hanging out together and quickly became friends. "The thing that was interesting about Russell was that, even though he'd been having success in the rap business, he had never made any money doing it and he kept doing it anyway," recalls Rubin. "I thought that was great. He was passionate about what he did."

In 1984, LL Cool J, then fifteen years old, sent a demo tape to Rubin at Weinstein/Def Jam. Impressed, Rubin recorded a single with him entitled "I Need a Beat," and because he was fed up with not being paid by the larger labels that were distributing his twelve-inches, he decided he wanted a real record company. "I said to Russell, 'Let's start this company together and put out "I Need a Beat" so we can get paid.' Russell said he didn't want to do it. He thought the independent record business was a small-time business and he had aspirations of making a deal with a major based on the fact that he managed these acts. I said, 'If you really think this record's a hit'—and he did—'here's what we'll do. I'll make all the records. I'll do all the work from my dorm and you can be my partner.' "

This was a more equitable arrangement than it might sound: while Rubin may have been the music whiz, Simmons had the respect of the rap community. "He was a great promotion man," says Nelson George. "Rick was a music fan, more of an artist. Russell had a different perspective—he was interested in *image*. At the time, those two were kindred wild spirits."

"I Need a Beat" sold more than 50,000 copies, and Def Jam, which Rubin and Simmons had started with a $5,000 investment, released seven twelve-inch records in the next year, selling a total of about 300,000 units. "Rick took rap music itself to a new level," Gary Harris says. "But Russell made it happen. He was brilliant at promotion."

CBS, specifically music-division head Al Teller and A&R director Steve Ralbovsky, was impressed by Def Jam's sales figures and made the duo a proposition: Simmons and Rubin would pick up to four acts a year and CBS would put up some money for Def Jam to promote and market the records, as well as help with distribution. They sealed the deal with a check for $600,000. Rubin, then twenty years old, sent a Xerox of the check to his parents so they'd stop hassling him about law school. "That's when it stopped being a hobby," he recalls. "At that point, I wanted to live the life of an artist."

The scene was changing, too. In 1986, Quincy Jones approached Simmons about throwing a sixteenth-birthday party for his son, Snoopy. "My son was heavily into hip-hop," says Jones. "It wasn't just the music, but a life-style. Fashion, slang, comedy, and all. It was the same with the beginnings of bebop. This was the first time in thirty-six years that there was a new music."

Simmons threw the party at Canastel's, an upscale Italian restaurant on Park Avenue South. "Everybody was there," Jones recalls. "The Fat Boys. T La Rock. Whodini. Run-DMC. There were guys there who probably never even met each other before. And there was Russell. For me, that was love at first sight. Russell was king of that world."

Simmons, who quit college twelve credits short of graduating, moved to Manhattan and started hanging out at clubs like Danceteria. "Russell was legendary," says George. "He was the point man for rap, but he still wore his sneakers untied, and he refused to wear anything like adult clothing."

He broke up with his Queens girlfriend and began dating a model named Marita Stavrou. "Russell has this model thing," one friend says. "He's a very charismatic guy and he's relentless. They usually give in."

Simmons and Stavrou went out, off and on, for two and a half years, until his infidelities became too much. "I told Russell a million times," says Stavrou, who is now engaged to Reggie Miller of the Indiana Pacers, " 'Keep your dick in your pants.' It's not like he was even fucking someone classy."

An argument could be made that Simmons was simply living out a rap lyric. This music is not big on monogamy and commitment—it is, instead, largely about bragging. "Rappers talk about how much money they have, how big their dick is, how dope their girl is," Simmons says. "You bragged in advance."

But when reality caught up with the fantasy, Simmons was faced with a conflict: how do you retain street credentials when you're a millionaire? "Nobody could have predicted this kind of success," Gary Harris says. "And there are a lot of people who think hip-hop died when Russell bought Cher's apartment."

By 1987, roughly two years into its deal with CBS, Def Jam had three hits in a row: Run-DMC and Aerosmith's "Walk This Way" became the first crossover rap single (as well as revitalizing Aerosmith's career); LL Cool J's *Bigger and Deffer* album sold two million copies; and the Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill* (originally titled *Don't Be a Faggot*) went quadruple-platinum, a feat that was not surpassed in rap until 1990.

As before, Rick Rubin was responsible for making the music. It was Rubin who dug "Walk This Way" out of his record collection; it was he who discovered both LL Cool J and the Beastie Boys—three upper-middle-class white guys from New York City. Meanwhile, in addition to handling promotion, Simmons had started a separate business, Rush Artist Management, which handled most of Def Jam's performers. "Rick is an artist," Simmons says matter-of-factly. "But he's not a great people person. That's part of being an artist and shit."

Tensions began to surface when Simmons hired Lyor Cohen to help run Rush Artist Management. A tall, rather dour man of Israeli extraction, Cohen has one of the worst reputations in the record business. He's called "a bully" and, in general, "a hard guy to like" with alarming regularity. But when you speak to the artists he represents they claim he is loyal and supportive.

When the Beastie Boys took off, their egos reportedly went out of whack. "They were unhappy with the way the press portrayed them," says Rick Rubin—a headline in *The Village Voice*, THREE JERKS MAKE A MASTERPIECE, told the story. "There were pieces that painted me to be a Svengali and painted them to be these

My father had a poem about me: 'Eat, sleep, don't shovel no snow/Get up, get dressed, go disco.' "

puppets. It created a great deal of friction and they didn't want anything to do with me. Lyor became their good new friend who they loved."

The Beasties-Cohen-Rubin rift was not the only problem: Simmons and Rubin were moving apart musically. Rick's taste was always harder-edged, rooted in his hard-rock background (he signed Slayer and Andrew Dice Clay to Def Jam), while Simmons was interested in R&B. Yet the clash of musical tastes could have been sorted out; the more central issue was business.

When it came time to renegotiate the CBS deal, "Russell and I had different goals," says Rubin. "There was so much bad shit going on at Def Jam from the success. Our biggest group, the Beastie Boys, were telling us they were leaving the label, and at the same time we were obligated to deliver a Beastie Boys record to CBS. Instead of CBS saying, 'You are our partner—we will work this out with the Beastie Boys,' they became the opposition. At that time, 70 percent of the sales in CBS's black-music division were by Def Jam, and they treated us like the worst garbage. They didn't care." So, while Simmons wanted to get the biggest advance possible from CBS, Rubin wanted to bet on Def Jam, take a small advance for the sake of independence, and make most of the money on the back-end profits.

The negotiating process was further complicated by the fact that Def Jam's lawyer, Allen Grubman, had also advised [former CBS Records head] Walter Yetnikoff and represented various CBS executives. "At one meeting Walter Yetnikoff smacked Allen Grubman in the face because Allen asked for something that pissed him off," Rubin recalls. "And all Allen could do was laugh about it. What else could he do? It was a complete conflict of interest, and it happens all the time." (Grubman says he has no recollection of the incident and maintains that "conflict of interest is not the norm.")

Finally, the renegotiation tore the partnership apart. Neither would compromise, and Rubin decided to leave. "It was like a bad marriage," Rubin recalls. "We were clashing so much that it wasn't going to work. Everybody couldn't be happy." They split Def Jam, an arrangement that took nearly three years to sort out.

Looking back, Rubin thinks that "Russell was always kind of scared of CBS—they held this magical power over him." For his part, Simmons likes being on his own. "When I make a deal, my partners are happy," he says. "That's the difference between me and Rick. Rick's very tough, but I have relationships that last forever. He has relationships that last a second."

While Simmons signed his deal with CBS, Rubin moved out to L.A. and started a new label, Def American, which has recently had great success with the Black Crowes. Actually, he never quite moved—he went to Hollywood to work on the sound track for *Less Than Zero,* lived at the Mondrian Hotel for seven months, and then simply stayed on, eventually buying a house off the Sunset Strip. He resumed life there without transporting so much as a single CD from New York. "I just started over," he says. "Completely over."

Simmons is standing in front of Rockefeller Center, waiting for his white bulletproof Rolls-Royce to pick him up. He is between parties—he just left an R&B awards ceremony at the Rainbow Room, where he was greeted like a long-lost son by older managers and record-company execs. He ate some shrimp, chatted with Nelson George, didn't drink, talked about wanting to smoke (he recently quit, sort of).

On this evening, like all evenings for the last twenty years, Simmons has several events planned. Since the age of fourteen, he has been going out every night of the week—"Monday through Sunday," says Marita Stavrou, his ex-girlfriend—and he likes to plan these outings in tiers. Typically, he'll begin with a party, then dinner at someplace like Tribeca Grill (in which he is an investor) or Café Tabac, a newer hot spot which is conveniently located near his house. "I've been going there for a month," he says. "In two months, I'll be going somewhere else."

Dinner (tier two) usually involves a lot of table-hopping. The omnipresent Brett Ratner will bring models over to meet Russell. "Hey, Shorty," Simmons will say, staring at the new convert with great intensity. "You're a very sexy girl." The girl usually lingers a bit and more friends/acquaintances/ex-girlfriends drop by to say hello. Invariably, Simmons will make a few calls to other friends on his portable phone, who then show up mid-meal. By dessert, he has become restless. It's time (tier three) to check out a club.

At around eleven P.M., Simmons and entourage usually go to a hip-hop show or El Morocco or some night spot where they play rap. Simmons is not interested in hearing rock music and he stays away from the kinds of clubs that play R&B. "They're too bourgie," he says with disdain.

But tonight Russell is headed to a surprise birthday party producer Jellybean Benitez is throwing for his wife, Carolyn, at Coffee Shop, a still-hip (but once ridiculously hip) restaurant in Union Square owned by former models and known for its stunning, exotically gorgeous staff. "I met Michelle there," says Simmons as we head downtown to pick her up. "She was the hostess."

Simmons is in good spirits this evening. He thrives on nightlife—it's the perfect antidote to his restlessness. It's also good for business: he can hear what they're playing, see what they're dancing to. He's crazed about losing touch with his audience. "Russell's worried about getting older," says George, "so he goes out every night."

But there's another reason for Simmons's elation this evening—a rape indictment against his younger brother, Joey, was dismissed for lack of evidence. Two days into the trial, it was revealed that the accuser had made seven similar charges in the last three years, and the main witness in the case told prosecutors that she had been asked to falsify her testimony.

Simmons had been obsessed with the trial. "He was so upset," recalls Brett Ratner. "He would look at the phone and say, 'You don't understand. I can't have meetings now.' "

"He put on a suit and a tie to sit in that courtroom," says Jeff Wald, a friend and business partner. "Russell don't

like to wear a suit and tie ever. *Ever.*''

Simmons toyed with the idea of suing the courts over Joey's experience. ''The dismissal got no press,'' he says, ''but Joey was in *every* tabloid in New York when she made the charges.'' He smiles. ''The worst part was Joey had to tell his wife he did sleep with this girl. She'll have him in jail for ten years at home.''

Arriving at Coffee Shop, Simmons yells ''SURPRISE!'' as he approaches the table. ''You're late!'' says Benitez, who has known Simmons since they were both hanging out in the early days. ''*What* a surprise!'' Seated next to Benitez is Gary Harris, who has worked for nearly everybody in rap, most recently helping to launch Color Me Badd for Irving Azoff, head of Giant Records. Across from him is Julie Brown, the ex–MTV V.J., who has been hanging out with these guys since moving to New York six years ago. Next to her is Michael Lippman, here with his wife, Nancy, who manages Jellybean and has known Simmons practically from the jump.

And so on. The newest addition is a twenty-four-year-old named Michael Karsch, who grew up with Benitez. Karsch works in mergers and acquisitions for Wasserstein, Perella & Co., and, on a recent vacation in Barbados, was befriended by Simmons.

''I want to sit on a board,'' Simmons says, introducing Karsch. ''So I can spread my influence. This guy is going to help me.'' Karsch looks a bit embarrassed, but takes his cue: ''Russell kept telling me over and over again in Barbados—he's not selling music, he's selling urban culture. I started to think about consumer products and where urban culture is really important. Beyond music, beyond Hollywood, corporate boards could be the next step. On a board, Russell could listen to and speak with C.E.O.'s of major companies. Like Pepsi-Cola or Nabisco or, say, Reebok. Reebok can use a guy like Russell to tell them who's cool and who's not.

''The audience for rap has really grown in the past few years,'' Karsch goes on. Or, to be less euphemistic, the audience has gone from black to white. ''Rap music is passé,'' says Gary Harris. ''Black people were the first people to like rap music and they were the first to jump ship.'' These days rap is primarily bought and listened to by suburban white males, the same audience that buys Guns N' Roses and Metallica. This is especially true of political bands such as Public Enemy and NWA (Niggers with Attitude). ''More than 50 percent of my P.E. records sell in the white suburbs,'' says Simmons. ''Maybe more. That's their audience.''

''White people like rap because they think it's political,'' says Rick Rubin. ''Not black people. For instance, Russell hated Public Enemy. He'd say, 'Rick, they're black punk rock. They're a waste of time. Nobody's gonna like them.' It's almost like people performing in blackface. It really is this false black entertainment that appeals to white people because they think it's black. And dangerous.''

There is, of course, still a core audience of blacks, but the ''inspirational'' rap they embraced has lost some of its power over time. ''Run is one of the old-school rappers, and all Run-DMC ever did was talk about how dope they were,'' says Simmons. ''Kids like to say, 'I've got a big long Caddy / Not like a Seville / Written on the side / Say Dressed to Kill.' Run never had a Caddy. He didn't have a car at the time, but people repeat those lyrics like they're theirs. What do they do? They brag.'' Simmons pauses. ''But if you're too big and you start talking that shit, people get a headache.''

In any case, Simmons doesn't mind the shift in the audience. His goal is to be as huge as possible, and he has changed role models accordingly. Instead of wanting to be Berry Gordy, he now aspires to be David Geffen. ''Berry Gordy is not dope,'' Simmons explains. ''We didn't make our music sound white to sell it to white people. And that's what he did. He made it white. He watered the shit down. Berry Gordy made black music into pop music and we made black music pop.

''That's why I want to be on a board,'' he resumes, talking to no one in particular. ''I want influence.'' But what about credibility? ''Fuck that,'' says Simmons. ''I'm not an artist. For me, credibility is, you can buy it.''

It's a Tuesday night and Simmons, in a frustrated mood for reasons he isn't exactly clear about, is taking the steam at a Russian bathhouse. He comes here to get what he calls ''a dick wash'' about once a week. The place is old and authentic (''none of that yuppie shit'') and is frequented primarily by Hasidic men, who take the heat for hours at a time. ''Yetnikoff used to come here,'' says Simmons as he pours a bucket of water over his head. ''And John Belushi.''

Wearing only a pair of shorts, he sits down on the bench in the steam room. He seems preoccupied, probably because of his Hollywood projects. The slow pace of the negotiations bothers him; he's used to the speed of rap, where records can be made in a matter of weeks. Although he's co-produced two movies (*Krush Groove* and *Tougher Than Leather*, which was directed by Rick Rubin and starred Run-DMC), he is unfamiliar with the machinations of the studio system.

Still, despite the standard argument over deal points, many executives in Hollywood want to work with Simmons. ''They know Russell is not going to do the same old stuff,'' says Stan Lathan, one of his partners. ''He doesn't travel in the same old circles or think the same old way. He's a perfect blend of a whole lot of different cultures and ways of thinking. He moves easily between worlds.''

In early 1990, amid talks with Jon Peters about an overall production deal with Columbia, Lathan urged Simmons to find just one picture he wanted to make. At the time, a creative executive at Columbia named Stephanie Allain was trying, without success, to drum up interest in a script called *Boyz N the Hood* and its young writer, John Singleton, who also wanted to direct the film. Via Lathan, she got Simmons the script before a trip to L.A. ''He hates to read,'' says Lathan, ''so we pray that there's nobody large on the plane that he can do the Russell thing with. But he called me from MGM Grand and said, 'This shit is dope!' And he was only halfway through it.''

Simmons met with Singleton and then went to Peters and said, ''There's one movie I want to do. And there's one filmmaker I'm excited about. And that's *Boyz N the Hood* and John Singleton.''

Reportedly, Peters had never heard of the script, but he read it that weekend, as did everyone else at Columbia. On Monday morning, Frank Price, then head of Columbia, discovered *Boyz N the Hood*. ''Russell's interest definitely intensified things,'' says one production executive.

Price and Simmons had a meeting, at the close of which Simmons was offered the chance to do the sound track. Nothing more. ''Frank Price and Russell are like oil and water,'' says a source close to both. ''Price is the ultimate Wasp and Russell was playing it street. His baseball hat was on backwards, his shoes were untied, and 'motherfucker' was the adjective of the day. I think Frank Price had a heart attack.''

''We didn't see eye to eye,'' Price says. ''And Russell's interest didn't spark production. Whether he was interested or not was irrelevant.'' Simmons, having sat on the sidelines while *Boyz N the Hood*

"Simmons is a perfect blend of different cultures. He moves easily between worlds."

became a critical and commercial smash, begs to differ. "Frank Price dicked me down," he says. "He says he found *Boyz N the Hood*—he found it in my hands. He tried to give me a sound track. He made *Blue Lagoon,* Part II. Anyone who makes *Blue Lagoon,* Part II is a piece of shit." Simmons pauses. "And I mean Sony. *Sony*. I've made Sony I don't know how much money—$100 million—and they're doing that to me. I just got fucked. I bring it up every time I negotiate with them."

A large man arrives in the steam room and says it's time for Simmons's massage. It's either the heat or some sort of cathartic reaction to recounting the *Boyz N the Hood* fiasco, but he looks refreshed. Simmons is not self-analytical—he is happiest in motion with a goal in mind. "I have an idea that Stan hates," he says rather mischievously. "What if we had Andrew Dice Clay"—who remains hugely popular with the black audience—"come on the HBO show in blackface and an Afro wig?" Simmons sounds excited. "Dice in blackface and no one would know." He gets up to leave. "Maybe not," he says. "But it would be funny as shit."

Another night, another party. Only this time Simmons is in Los Angeles for the Soul Train Music Awards, the one awards ceremony he never misses. The show is more like a reunion than anything else, and artists ranging from Janet Jackson to Prince to Patti LaBelle all show up. Nearly every artist seems to win in some category, and Simmons jumps up when Public Enemy, *sans* its leader, Chuck D, goes onstage to accept its award for best rap album.

After the show, Simmons spends about forty-five minutes finding the limo and then another half-hour waiting for Andre Harrell and his girlfriend, Tracy Kimball, to show up. Harrell, who is probably Simmons's best friend, is ecstatic: his group, Jodeci, won the last award given out tonight, best R&B/soul album of the year.

Harrell and Simmons, who once crowned Andre "the king of the colored people," are a somewhat surprising pair. While Simmons affects a street thing, Harrell is after a more sophisticated image. Once known as Dr. Jeckyll, he and his partner, Mr. Hyde, were the first (and probably only) rappers to wear suits and ties. After giving up performing (Simmons managed him), Harrell went to work for Def Jam and then, in 1985, started his own company, Uptown Records. "Andre didn't want to count on rap for his career," says Simmons. "That's the kind of nigger he is."

Uptown Records first scored big with Heavy D and the Boyz, "the overweight Romeo." (A digression: many rappers tend toward bulkiness—excess flesh seems to connote opulence.) Harrell went on to sign Guy, new-jack-swing producer Teddy Riley's pet project, and, most recently, has had platinum success with Jodeci. Last year, he also produced the movie *Strictly Business,* a romantic comedy about a young real-estate broker who enlists the help of a homeboy in order to win the love of a downtown girl. The three main characters were meant to symbolize distinct types in black society: bourgeois, bohemian, and street. Harrell's dream project is a big-screen treatment of *Bewitched* starring Julia Roberts and Tom Hanks. "Not exactly *Boyz N the Hood,*" deadpans Simmons.

Uptown's classy, smooth R&B sound appeals to inner-city kids who, as Harrell has said, "want flashy clothes and flashy cars, but they don't want to acquire those things by being drug dealers. The black community is uncomfortable with hardcore rap being the major showcase for black culture. They think it gives white people the wrong impression that all black people are barbarians."

So here in the limo is Andre, with his slick black suit from Charivari, and there is Russell, in his jeans and SPELMAN sweatshirt. "People call Andre a social climber," says Nelson George. "And they don't say that about Russell, even though, in some sense, they're both after it all. But Andre's more in the black world and Russell's more in the white. Just look at the way they dress."

"Where should we go?" Simmons is asking now. "The thing to do," says Harrell, "is to go to Le Dôme." Simmons wants to go straight to the post–Soul Train Awards party, but Harrell is definite: "Le Dôme is on the Soul Train Awards tip," he says.

His girlfriend, Tracy, calls up the restaurant, and after an initial rejection ("Say it's for ANDRE HARRELL"), a reservation is set.

It turns out to be a good idea: Le Dôme is packed with Soul Train winners and the record-company execs who handle them. Luther Vandross is at the next table, and Vanessa Williams is around here somewhere. We sit down and Simmons, who is instantly bored, takes out his phone and calls Michelle in New York. She isn't home, so he studies the menu, then studies an attractive girl at an adjacent table. He signals for the waiter and hands him a packet of Equal. "Send it over to that girl," he says. Usually he sends over sugar, and with a note ("The snake is Red / Violets are Blue / This sugar is Sweet / and So are You"), but he's not really interested in this girl. He's just waiting around, kind of bored.

The girl looks kind of confused (*Equal?*) but smiles, and Harrell, who has been watching, laughs. Simmons dials Michelle again. "My father says I'm not married because I get too much pussy," Simmons says.

"Uh-huh," says Harrell, changing the subject. "What are you going to eat, Tracy?"

When the food comes, the conversation turns to business. Simmons is in town to meet with Tri-Star about his movie project *The Clown Prince,* the story of a white boy who grew up in the ghetto and must now adjust to an Ivy League college, and he's also hoping to complete his negotiations on *The Johnson Posse,* a TV show for HBO. "Our business is about succeed and sustain," says Allen Grubman. "*Succeed and sustain*. A lot of people succeed for ten minutes, twenty minutes, an hour. That's easy. Russell is now moving into a new phase. He will definitely sustain."

In the last six months Simmons has seemed, as he would put it, inspired. "Five years from now," he says, polishing off his fish, "here's what I want. A hit show on TV. A hit movie. And LL Cool J to sell 10 million records." Harrell perks up. "That all?" he says. "That's all," says Simmons. "Ain't it enough?" □

A Death Foretold

(Continued from page 103) tenure as editor this erstwhile Jesuit trainee's obsessiveness, his incessant need for control, translated into a brilliant career. "He never relaxed," recalls Moreno, echoing Senator Rigau's description of the younger de Dios. "He had that ego thing with every story. It was him against humankind."

"He was a powerful personality, a great manager," admits Ramírez. At his best, he had the ability to excite reporters, to motivate them to do more investigative work. He ran witty columns labeling Mayor Koch "Eduardo el Divino." His great triumph was beginning a section called "Our Countries," full of news items from Central and South America. It meant that the hundreds of thousands of immigrants pouring into New York turned to *El Diario* first. Circulation climbed.

But that was "the old Manuel." In the view of both Ramírez and Moreno, something snapped. "Manuel changed," says Moreno, drawing deeply on his cigarette. "He became more serious, more tormented. He started getting deeper and deeper into the narco trafficking in Queens." Tracking the drug dealers became de Dios's new obsession, and as in his earlier, Cuban activities, de Dios, it seems, did not know where to safely draw the line. Or did not want to. "In the columns," Moreno continues, "he used to say, 'even if this costs me my life.' In the end, it was Manuel de Dios, investigator, not a human being." And, for detractors, something less than a responsible reporter.

"He was a yellow journalist, with no respect for the truth," says Esteban Creste, whose family fled the Argentinean military junta and who covers City Hall for *El Diario*. According to Creste, everywhere de Dios looked, he saw a drug conspiracy. He recalls how de Dios received an anonymous tip accusing a Bronx businessman of allowing open drug trafficking in his illegal social club. He printed the story without any further checking. "The man showed up at *El Diario* with his lawyer to complain, in a polite way. He had evidence that his club was legal and said that he never allowed drug dealing to go on there. Manuel just abused them."

El Diario reporters did not appreciate de Dios's practice, acclaimed for its gutsiness in his obituaries, of dispatching a reporter and photographer to cover crack markets. When they pointed out that this routine was going to get somebody killed, de Dios, according to Manuel Avendaño, an *El Diario* city editor, replied that "it would be good for circulation if a reporter got killed."

"The irony is," adds Creste with a certain relish, "*he* got killed and our circulation *has* gone up."

De Dios increasingly honed his image as a journalist so dangerous he was marked for death. Conversations with the dead man's friends turn to recollections of warnings cavalierly spurned. At a memorial Mass in a church not far from the scene of de Dios's murder, Father Dario Betancourt recounted how he had advised him to be careful. De Dios, elevating himself to the level of his namesake, replied, "Christ died for telling the truth."

"His biggest thrill," says his old friend Alberto Rodriguez in Puerto Rico, "was to state things that other people were afraid to say."

"I turned on the TV [news about the murder]," Moreno exclaims, bumming a cigarette, "and I was *mad* at him. People here weren't sad, they were angry." Putting others carelessly on the front line left a lingering bitterness. Three weeks after the murder, the joke circulating around *El Diario* was that "Manuel de Dios had no enemies. Only his friends hated him."

The "tormented" de Dios began to preach. "He became a real moralist, denouncing drugs, sex. I mean," Moreno says, gesturing toward the window of his SoHo office, "this is New York City. Who cares, if your name's not Clinton?" The irony is that de Dios was just discovering how intoxicating drugs and sex could be.

In 1987, de Dios began two love affairs, one with a well-endowed native of Bogotá, the other, a journalistic affair, with a drug lord. The two converged in Jacksonville, Florida, where de Dios installed Vicky Sánchez as his mistress and *compañera* (partner), to help him cover the trial of Carlos Lehder. Lehder had been apprehended—"kidnapped," as he puts it—by the Colombian police and handed over to the U.S. authorities, who touted him as the mastermind of the Medellín cartel. In fact, he was only a lieutenant, the architect of transportation routes through the Bahamas. But the rakish, witty Lehder told tales of the dark world of the cartels that found an eager and uncritical audience in de Dios. He could not tear himself away, spending weeks on end in Jacksonville, jeopardizing his career (he was still editor of *El Diario*) and shattering his marriage. Like other journalists who have plowed this terrain, de Dios seems to have discovered that the power and the danger that electrify the world of the drug lords are more exhilarating than the use of what they call "the product."

His coverage of the trial annoyed his boss, Ramírez. "He started making Lehder out to be a hero," a kind of "Robin Hood." Part of Lehder's riff was that the real villains of the cocaine epidemic were the gringos who consumed it and whose banks and corrupt officials profited by it. De Dios "was lashing out at everyone. People were threatening lawsuits. I pulled him out of Jacksonville. He was very upset with that."

Tensions at *El Diario* increased. "[De Dios] became more aggressive, [attacking everyone] from the mayor down to local businessmen. I said, 'Manuel, you're being reckless.' " In his column, he berated Mayor Koch ceaselessly for every conceivable shortcoming, real and imagined. Ramírez killed the column. In 1989, de Dios launched a radio talk show on WJIT, then a Spanish-language station, titled *Lo Que Otros Callan*—"What Others Dare Not Say." Ramírez put his foot down. "I told him, 'If you're going to do this radio, you're not going to run this paper.' "

It was a fateful moment. Presented with the possibility that his voice might be silenced, de Dios threw over his *El Diario* job and with it the career he had been building for twelve years. From now on, it would be Manuel de Dios against the world.

"In the end," says Ramírez, "we parted with 'Don't say anything bad about me and I'm not going to say anything bad about you.' "

De Dios didn't even attempt to keep his word. His appetite for detecting drug conspiracies increased, along with a readiness to lash out at all those who he felt had betrayed him. He repeatedly attacked his former colleagues at *El Diario*. "He said we were moving drugs in our lobby," Ramírez says with disgust. "He said we were running Dominican drug deals from here."

He continued taking what others considered to be foolish risks, railing on the airwaves at the drug business and indeed the flourishing brothel industry along Roosevelt Avenue. (The police, in consequence, were goaded to raid some of the

brothels, to the fury of their owners.) Miguel Pérez, another Cuban host of the radio show, was expecting trouble. "[De Dios] would actually announce on the air that 'so-and-so, who lives at the following address and drives a yellow Cadillac, is dealing drugs out of such and such an address.' He got away with it because the station was owned by Anglos who didn't speak Spanish. The last time I saw him was at the funeral of [a] guy who was killed by the drug dealers. We embraced and I whispered in his ear, 'Hey, man, watch yourself, it's getting close.' He laughed it off: 'If they want to get me, they will.' "

Even after he'd lost the radio show when in April 1990 WJIT switched to an English-language rock 'n' roll format, he had a new platform, the glossy magazine *Cambio XXI* ("Change in the Twenty-first Century"). It was founded on $75,000 raised from investors to whom he had sold his dream of the vast possibilities of Hispanic soccer in New York.

Friends and enemies of de Dios agree that his liaison with Vicky Sánchez, a part-time photojournalist, was as much a catalyst for the changes he was undergoing as was his infatuation with the Colombian cartels. They had met in one of the Colombian clubs on Roosevelt Avenue. For a man whose private life had always been relatively ascetic, she marked a major departure. "Vicky wore these low-cut dresses. She was just hanging out of them. Once she got him, she was very possessive of her man," recalls Moreno. He vividly remembers de Dios, torn by guilt at abandoning his wife for Vicky, explaining to him in tears that it was "a sexual thing."

At the very public funeral for de Dios in Puerto Rico and at the mobbed memorial service in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Mrs. Manuel de Dios was forgotten in the shadows. Maria Felix, his wife of eighteen years, was upstaged by Vicky. At a restaurant booth in the barren desert of outer Queens, Maria, a Puerto Rican he had met on a blind date, seems vulnerable and sad and very much alone. "I haven't," she begins slowly, "talked to anybody." Maria never had time for a child. As a flight attendant, she had difficult hours and worked nonstop during her marriage. For many of those years she supported de Dios, leaving him free to pursue his ill-paid profession. In her mid-forties, she has a kind, drawn face, and is very proper, dressed in tweed jacket and turtleneck. Her grief is private. "I'll be guarded." She sips ice water to steady herself. "I haven't had time to think. What kind of journalist was Manuel?" She pauses for a long time. "When he was with me, he always went for the truth, which means he went for the throat. He worked all the time."

There was one moment of pleasure she recalls clearly, a trip to the Dominican Republic with Fernando Moreno and his wife, Leslie. "Manuel really relaxed," she says, smiling broadly, "for once." As Manuel's English was still poor, Maria was delegated to cope with the Anglo world around them. Moreno recalls that "she paid the bills. Talked to the telephone man. And," he adds, "she did his shirts."

> "We embraced and I whispered in his ear, 'Hey, man, watch yourself, it's getting close.'"

When de Dios walked out on Maria, he walked out on his old friends. "Vicky had a real hold on him," recalls Ramírez. "She was responsible for alienating 99 percent of his friends," including Moreno. "Vicky was nothing [as a reporter]," says Moreno. "But Manuel was so desperate for a *compañera*, a woman he could work with as a partner, he taught her everything. Manuel gave her a gossip column at the paper. It was terrible. It was supposed to be anonymous, though everybody knew it was the boss's girlfriend. She signed it 'Melody Moon.' That's why they named their baby Melody."

Vicky Sánchez mourns in a cramped walk-up apartment, where she and Manuel had lived, in one of the rougher neighborhoods in Queens. A patrol car is parked out front for protection. She has acquired a manager since the death of de Dios. Legal adviser Manny Mirabal screens all visitors and organizes her appearances on local television, notably a Spanish-language equivalent of *America's Most Wanted*. She is closeted in the kitchen with one of the detectives from the 110th Precinct. A close family friend, Alberto Rodriguez, confusingly bearing the same name as de Dios's old companion in Puerto Rico, is fielding calls in the impeccably neat study that was de Dios's office and editorial suite, where *Cambio XXI* was written and edited for the printers. There is a wall of books, a row of silent computers, and a framed note from Carlos Lehder. The pencils are sharpened. The tiny Melody, at two years of age too young to understand that her father has been shot and killed, is in the next room crying for her mother. When she pops her delicate face around the corner, it is an eerie likeness of Manuel.

Alberto, the family friend, seems an odd comrade for a tireless fighter against drugs. Waiting for Vicky to emerge, this affable Colombian man-about-town describes himself as having been the friend over the years to a set that would not have invited Manuel de Dios to their parties. "We were always at Mortimer's. I was very good friends with Steve Rubell." He laughs. "Steve would see me and say, 'Thank God Alberto is here. Everything is O.K. now.' Do you know Taki? He both was and is a beautiful person."

Vicky interrupts the flow. She is dressed in jeans and a shapeless sweatshirt. Her face is free of makeup and her hair is unbrushed. She speaks in a high, sweet voice, in passable English. When she first met de Dios, says Vicky, "one of the things I admired about him was that he was very honest. He had plenty of chances to be a millionaire in his position. The editor for the most powerful Spanish paper in New York. He was a person that really goes after what he believes. He was very faithful to his causes. He believed in something."

Under the LaGuardia flight path, Alberto tries to clarify Manuel's beliefs as he understood them. "What led to his downfall was he pointed the finger at the right source. This was a cynical, corruptive organization that has direct connections to major cartels. They have bought the city government. They have bought the police department. They have bought all these outlets where they launder the money."

"He was trying to wake up the conscience of our people," Vicky offers. "That was the most important thing. He was trying to let people know that 'you don't have to be afraid.' He thought that

drugs were very harmful to our youth. I think that was the main point of his fight against drugs. Especially now that we have a child. If you are a father, you start thinking.

"I remember when he used to be editor of *El Diario–La Prensa,* a reporter came in. He said, 'Oh, Manuel, I'm worried because I got a strange call last night. I'm scared.' " She mimics the timid voice, then the cool reply of de Dios. "'Manuel said, 'Well, you have two options if you're scared. You have to change your job, go to work in a bank, behind a desk. The other one is, you can buy a dog.' Maybe," she adds laconically, "he bought a dog."

De Dios had said portentously that if he was killed, people would know who was guilty. Yet his *compañera* is at a loss. "That's something I can't really tell you. There were so many [enemies]. It was people in politics. People in drugs. It's hard to tell. To point to exactly who." Alberto interrupts to say that the demon at hand is "a network. Politicians, public officials, people involved in illicit trades, prostitution, laundering of money, which is what is meant by syndicates. A syndicate is a conglomerate or configuration of individuals in high places—traders, businessmen—that dominate the flow of the life source."

Vicky has been poring over back issues of *Cambio XXI* and over the first and only issue of *Crimen,* a new magazine de Dios had launched just before his death, to see if she could identify who might be saying: "This is not good for me. He's saying too much. He's getting closer to me." Alberto nods. "Vicky's correct. He was getting very, very close..." Vicky finishes his thought, vaguely: "...to something."

Alberto takes a breath. "He was getting very close to putting all the pieces together."

Vicky looks for words: "They called him 'untouchable'—*intocable.*"

"You couldn't bribe him," finishes Alberto, "to shut up."

Vicky and Alberto see shadows in the cave. Their disjointed analysis suggests the air of conspiracy that flowed through this diminished editorial domain, where Manuel de Dios, with no staff, told himself that he alone could "blow the whole thing wide open." The fragments of investigations he left behind tell the story of a marginalized editor searching for a story that could restore his prestige and bring in much-needed funds. Since leaving his post at *El Diario,* de Dios had slid into bankruptcy. At the end, he was bringing home $1,200 a month.

In April, Vicky brought out a much-anticipated postmortem edition of *Cambio XXI.* In it, she defiantly printed a full-page list of all those people the ghost of Manuel de Dios and his medium, Vicky, think are worth "shit." *A la Mierda* to, among others, the Cuban exiles. *A la Mierda* to *El Diario. A la Mierda* to the narco traffickers with their salsa and merengue. *A la Mierda* to "the militarist government of Bush, his new order, his wars, his invasions."

The files in de Dios's office contain the beginnings of a book called *Cali Pachanguero,* the title of a Colombian salsa tune. It was to have been an exposé of the Cali cartel. He had splashed D.E.A. documents naming purported cartel operatives across the pages of *Crimen.* There are notes on Joseph Occhipinti, a disgruntled I.N.S. agent convicted of shaking down a group of Dominican bodega owners. De Dios had taken up his cause, asserting the Dominicans were in reality drug traffickers who had conspired with city officials to frame the hapless Occhipinti. There are letters from Carlos Lehder. And there are notes on right-wing Cuban and Puerto Rican terrorism, an old interest he was preparing to revive.

In *Cambio XXI,* he had been talking up a group of Queens businessmen, named, according to his police sources, "the Nine Kings." Their legitimate businesses, said de Dios, were merely fronts for laundering drug money. He suggested the shadowy group were the "intellectual authors" behind a string of professional killings in Queens over the past few years. He did not, for once, name names, confining himself to fustian hints: "The day these crimes are solved, the sidewalks of our community will tremble because of the figures involved." It was vintage Manuel.

The Queens that captivated Manuel de Dios is just waking up at midnight. Ilda Lee, the exotic Cuban-Chinese empress of Club Añoranzas, ushers in the morning as she bellows into the microphone, "Welcome to Little Colombia." Four-inch rhinestone earrings flash across a gown of red-and-black-beaded satin, cut for ample cleavage. Ilda Lee was a young ballerina at the Tropicana in Havana when Graham Greene was in the crowd. "Here we have a table from Cali—Caleños, welcome. And there, from Argentina. Hello, Peru, Ecuador, Puer-r-rto Rr-r-rico." She blows a kiss to a table of fierce-looking men in black leather and silver chains. It is guest-singers night, and the band, in smart suits with shoulder pads, strum their inlaid guitars to back up a smooth performer from Ecuador. Tables are littered with eighty-dollar bottles of Aguardiente Cristal, Colombian "firewater," known locally as "the breakfast of champions."

The stage is festooned with banners of the Nacional football club of Medellín, owned by drug lord Pablo Escobar, now serving time in a custom-built Colombian villa that passes for a jail. There are competing flags from the América club, owned by the Cali cartel, which has just won a match against a team from Peru. The Caleños are drinking heavily. The band strikes up "Cali Pachanguero." Handsome women in eight-inch skirts with flush escorts take to the floor. The dancing is stylish, up to the high standards of Cali and Medellín.

"This was one of Manuel's favorite hangouts," shouts *El Diario* city editor Manuel Avendaño over the salsa. He is disconsolate that the soccer team from his native Peru lost the match. It is well after three A.M., and as he nurses an aguardiente, he describes a dream from the night before. "I was in a park. Manuel appeared and said, 'I have to talk to you!' He was very insistent. He said, 'You have to look at the Cali cartel.' I said, 'But you're dead.' Manuel said, 'Don't worry about that. Just look at the Cali cartel.' "

Bucolic scenes from rural Colombia appear on a gigantic screen, with a tango singer leading his horse through whitewashed villages. Colombian girls in tight breeches trot past. The manager of Club Añoranzas comes to greet the table. Orlando Alarcon is one of the four Alarcon brothers, a leading family of Roosevelt Avenue. They are "*paisas,*" raised south of Medellín. Orlando, like most Colombians, displays perfect manners. The formality of being frisked for guns at the door of his club requires just a subtle brush against the pockets, almost an embrace.

The frisk is more formal at Orlando's eldest brother's club, Chibcha, down the strip. The bouncer wears a tuxedo and a gun. Jorge Alarcon—one of the names on de Dios's posthumously published "shit-list"—has experienced a few unpleasant incidents. Two years ago he was shot in the mouth. Miraculously, the bullet drilled a neat hole through his cheek,

without even grazing his teeth. His uncle, who once tended the door, was shot dead four years ago. Alarcon is impeccably dressed in an elegant double-breasted suit with silk tie. His spectacles give him an intellectual appeal. He exudes *paisa* hospitality. "I had a lot of respect for Manuel de Dios," he says quietly.

Although Alarcon declines to discuss it, de Dios not only regularly patronized his establishments but also accepted countless free meals. "Jorge Alarcon would never allow Manuel to pay anything, certainly not while he was editor," remembers Moreno. "Jorge would fight not to take money, which was why I had to stop going to his places. They would announce Manuel from the stage—'We have with us Manuel de Dios Unanue from *El Diar-r-rio–La P-r-rensa*!' He loved it—he would get up and take a bow. Jorge loved it, too, because it showed people that this was a decent, legal place to be."

"He helped me get my license," says Alarcon. "Later, he changed. It was when Manuel left Maria for Vicky."

Alarcon had rented an office to the journalist a few doors down Roosevelt Avenue. De Dios's colleagues at *El Diario* say he was eight months behind on the rent. Avendaño claims the situation was tense. "Manuel owed the Alarcon brothers a lot of money, and the Alarcons wanted to be paid. They had an argument."

Alarcon brushes off the tawdry suggestion that he needed the rent money de Dios owed him. "The only thing that bothered me was that when de Dios left he took the chairs."

Jorge Alarcon's upstairs office is cluttered with family photos, along with soccer posters and an exceptional pair of miniatures by the Medellín artist Fernando Botero. The children are as far from Roosevelt Avenue and the deafening El train as possible, on a farm in Brittany. "They speak French, Spanish, English, and Breton," says the senior Alarcon proudly.

His Queens empire includes interests in radio and television, with a virtual monopoly on U.S. cable coverage of Latin-American soccer. He is now collecting Colombian soap operas for Channel 66 in Queens. "We have a million Colombians here," he says, his eyes lighting up with the possibilities, "the third-largest city in Colombia." Discrimination against Colombians, he laments, is rife in New York. "For Colombians here, it is very hard. If a Colombian gets mugged, the police immediately say he's in the drug business. There are a lot of honest merchants here, with legal businesses like me."

Alarcon is carefully discreet on the volleys of accusations that appeared over the last few years in de Dios's magazine about prosperous Roosevelt Avenue merchants operating as money-laundering fronts for Colombian drug money. "Manuel," he says with studied understatement, "did not know Colombia." He points out that the journalist's opus on Medellín, *Los Secretos del Cartel Medellín,* which he published himself in 1988, was drawn largely from books by Colombian authors. "A lot of Manuel's drug stuff had already been printed,"

> "This guy was getting stuff from the C.I.A. I ask myself, Is this a journalist?"

Alarcon says, emphasizing the point that the crusading journalist, who claimed to print "what others dare not say," was working off old material. As such, the fearless investigator was hardly more than an irritant.

The detectives on the de Dios case are not so sure. His death bore the signature of the *sicarios,* the hit men of the cartels. Their weapon of choice is the 9-mm. automatic, the gun used to kill him. The venue, a very public restaurant, led the detectives to believe the "intellectual author" who ordered the hit was someone in "the business." "It's their S.O.P.," standard operating procedure, explains one detective. "The current rate for Queens *sicarios* is $200 a hit.... There are [cartel] executives here in Queens who are high enough to order a hit. They keep Colombia informed.... The *sicarios* are just kids. It's like having an '800' number—1-800-KILL-HIM.

"Colombian homicides," explains the detective, "are the hardest [to solve]. Everyone is in the business. They won't talk to the police. The police down there in Colombia can take you out around the corner and put a couple of bullets in your head, bang, bang. Plus, they know if they talk, their families are going to get hit, their kids, their grandmothers, their mothers—whatever." The detective is unambiguous on "the business" of the Little Colombia section of Queens. "If you're going to say that it's all drug money here, you'd be right. If you're going to say that this place is *awash* with drug money, you'd be right." He drops his hand to his beeper. An informant is trying to get through.

The detective looks at his own role in the "drug war," and that of government agencies, with a jaundiced eye, echoing de Dios's accusations of gringo culpability: "Are you going to tell me that George Bush and Manuel Noriega were not in bed together? Give me a fucking break." Seizures are simply steady revenue for the government. The trade goes on unabated. "The recession has not hit the cocaine market."

In 1990, 400,000 kilos were sold in New York, "in one year, one year. Where does it all go? Wall Street. Wall Street is the capital of the cocaine market. A Learjet can take seven hundred kilos, at $22,000 per. You fly it into Westchester. The pilots are getting $1,000 per key—that's $700,000 for one trip. It's all run from Queens. They have houses here where they install women just to sit on the cash. They pack up the money and ship it all back to Colombia."

In the de Dios case, he must look at "Colombians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans." Dominicans are retail salesmen in New York, the subcontractors of the Colombians, and they have a reputation for being extraordinarily vicious. "They're bad, bad people," the detective says gravely. "You raid Dominicans, you always have to have a man covering the windows. You've got them all lined up with a gun on them and they start shuffling sideways. You say, 'Hey, what the hell are you doing?' And suddenly he's out the window, three, four, five stories up, he's out the window. You either find a pile of broken bones down there or he staggers away."

For the detective, Manuel de Dios was a small fish in an ocean of cocaine.

Twenty-five hundred miles south of New York, home-office executives of the Cali cartel say they have never heard of Manuel de Dios. The man who traded on exposing their inner workings had never been here. When one of them is asked

whether Medellín might have orchestrated the death, the response is simply "Cali controls Queens. Medellín people there are now working for Caleños. It's all controlled from here.

"Right now, the only competition for Cali in Queens is the Mexicans, who are bringing loads directly from Bolivia. But they don't understand transportation, so they have to depend on the Colombians for that"—the Colombian smiles—"for the jump." "The jump" is the flight over the border to Los Angeles. "You don't want to go through Houston," he says, sipping aguardiente. "It's very hot right now."

The speaker is drawing a road map of transportation routes on a napkin at Cali Viejo, a lush garden restaurant in the hills above Cali. The linen is all brilliant pinks and turquoises. Butterfly orchids grow in the hollows of surrounding trees. In the past three years the "capos" of this city's "Mafia," as the Colombians call their cartels, have consolidated their position as the leading purveyors of cocaine, watching with satisfaction as their hated rivals in Medellín, including Pablo Escobar, have been slaughtered or jailed.

While Medellín's Mafia was engaged in a frenzy of death-squad activity and bombings, Cali lay low. Its executives developed a reputation for fine art collections and a sound business approach. Its Old Guard, like the Rodriguez Orejuela brothers, behaved like ordinary captains of industry, calling startled reporters to complain about "inaccuracies." Their technique has been to deflect attention from themselves. If they needed someone removed, they simply bought the policemen and army officers to do it, legally.

The expensive pen is moving across the napkin from L.A. north and east to Queens. "You have to avoid Jersey. It's very bad there. The loads are kept relatively small, maybe five hundred k's, which goes to the man in charge of distribution in Queens. He then distributes among, say, five people." The lines fan out in a kind of family tree. "The five people, each having 150 k's to 50 k's, have their people. The Dominicans do most of the street work. Colombians and Dominicans can get along. Nobody wants to deal with the Cubans. They have a bad reputation." He shakes his head. "The accounting for all these transactions is very exact. It's all on computer here. It's all credit. I figure for each five-hundred-k load two people get killed."

Independent traders are free to feed into the system as long as they pay their bills. Anyone in New York who loses a load must pay up in cash or property. "We have," says the cartel insider, waving at the hills surrounding Cali, "hostages all over the place." While accounting disputes are ironed out, family members, often children, "read and pray." If things go badly, they are shot.

In the cartel's corporate suites, executives are mystified as to what sort of threat the journalist might have posed. Queens merchants who launder cash are regarded here as inconsequential. One Roosevelt Avenue businessman whom de Dios attacked with much fanfare is quickly dismissed. "Everybody knows he is laundering money there. But it's small amounts, back to the families of the small traders."

Big money, say the Cali men, is passed through large retail establishments and banks in Manhattan. A substantial amount of the cash is now simply "hand-carried" back to Cali. "You can walk into a bank with a paper bag—no problem."

If there is any sign here that Cali might have posed a threat to Manuel de Dios, it is only in the fact that the Mafia is expanding as a result of its successful battles with rival cartels. Lieutenants from Medellín have come to work here, and their style of operating is rough. "I am very worried about things now," a Caleño says behind closed doors. "The old capos are losing control. The young people in the business here are violent. A lot of people are getting killed. People in Queens, in the business, don't want to come to Cali anymore." He speaks in low tones. "I had three hit men in my apartment the other day. They no longer have *respect*." Some of the most famous names in the business are operating freely here. "You've seen the tall skinny guy. Skinny is a hit man. El Duende [the ghost], so nice and charming. He's killed a hundred people. El Gato [the cat] has very good teeth. That's why he's always smiling. It's not safe anymore."

"Margarita," says a hostess from an old Cali family, "has a gory story for you." As the guests are seated in the tasteful sitting room of a heavily guarded villa, Margarita speaks in her lilting aristocratic voice of the breakdown of social order. "A young girl we know well had a Mafia boyfriend. She left him for another boy from a good family. The couple's bodies were found in a field, raped and neatly chopped into pieces." "However much you try to insulate yourself," a guest adds dolefully, "you are touched by the business." The conversation has echoes of those in Queens, only here everything is much bigger—more money, many more deaths.

Another well-heeled guest can only speculate on the effect of the newest business in the region. "We have a new flower," he says with a smile, "the poppy."

If the edge that has crept into Cali has been exported to Queens, de Dios might have been hit without undue thought. But when insiders are shown what should have been the offending exposés on the cartel in Queens and its alleged *sicarios*, they read the clippings and shrug: "This is nothing. Who cares about this?" There's one qualification: "Maybe if this guy was handing information to the police or D.E.A. it could have caused a problem."

Back in New York, a fifteen-year veteran of the New York Police Department narcotics squad echoes the Cali insiders: "It doesn't make sense [for Cali to have ordered the hit]. Why attract the heat? I really feel the reason he got whacked was the Puerto Rican thing. There were some bigwigs involved. Real stars. The F.B.I., U.S. marshals, U.S. officials. I'm inclined to believe the reason was political."

For all his efforts to expose the Cali cartel, Manuel de Dios had failed to make an impression at headquarters. In New York, too, he may have seemed misguided. But on the island where he was buried, it is a different matter. He is a celebrity in Puerto Rico, regarded as either a martyr or a traitor. The journalist who fell from grace in New York managed, in his last days, to be taken seriously by serious people in San Juan.

He had flown down on February 26, just two weeks before he was killed, because his old patron, Senator Marco Rigau, needed him.

As chairman of the Puerto Rican Senate Judiciary Committee, Rigau presided from October 1991 until this past April over hearings into a long-running Puerto Rican political scandal known to every islander as Cerro Maravilla. The name refers to a mountain along the southern coast, where, on July 25, 1978, two young militant *independentistas*, as partisans of Puerto Rican independence from the U.S. are called, were executed by police. The official story at the time was that the "terrorists" were about to blow up a huge television tower when police waylaid them and shot them in a gun battle. It

was later established that, in fact, the offenders had been lured to the mountain by a police agent provocateur and been murdered in cold blood after surrendering. Evidence of a police conspiracy is overwhelming. "[The *independentistas*] were supposed to bomb the towers, but didn't have a bomb," points out chief Senate investigator Gary Pérez, who ran the hearings with Senator Rigau. He is sitting in the tower suite of the Caribe Hilton in San Juan. "Their hearts were blown out. They had cuts. They were beaten. From the knees below, there was no blood, only mud on the knees. They were kneeling."

The facts of what occurred on Cerro Maravilla are no longer in dispute. What Rigau and Pérez, fourteen years later, were exploring in the hearings were the further, more ominous, political dimensions of the scandal. It seems that the enticement of the two young men to their deaths on Cerro Maravilla was only part of an elaborate scheme by the Puerto Rican government of the time to deliberately create a "terrorist threat" from the independence movement so that it could be triumphantly defeated, earning praise from Washington. And when the grisly facts of what truly happened on the mountaintop started to emerge, there was an elaborate cover-up. The involvement of the F.B.I. and the Justice Department in the whitewash has drawn Sam Dash, famed as the chief counsel of the Senate Watergate hearings, to advise the committee. "It's worse than a cover-up," Dash declares. "It's *such* an abuse of government."

Enter de Dios. Five days before the 1978 murders on Cerro Maravilla, he had published a piece in *El Diario* based on an interview with a "senior Puerto Rican police intelligence official." Its headline read, PUERTO RICO: EL BELFAST DE LOS GRINGOS. The theme was that Puerto Rico could shortly expect a wave of terrorism on the order of Northern Ireland's. Since the "terrorism" that erupted five days later on Cerro Maravilla was subsequently learned to have been orchestrated by the authorities, the question arose as to whether the "senior Puerto Rican police intelligence official" who tipped off de Dios had been part of the plot. Rigau and his committee were extremely eager to find out who de Dios's well-placed source had been, and paid for his ticket to San Juan so that he could testify.

Manuel de Dios, investigative reporter, had no qualms about immediately identifying his informant. It was, he said, the formidable police chief named Desiderio Cartagena. As was his custom, de Dios said the name unflinchingly, in front of the packed Senate hearing, watched by millions of viewers in both Puerto Rico and on Spanish cable TV in New York.

Cartagena, now in the private-security business, was also called to testify. He denied under oath ever having met the reporter. But he underestimated de Dios's tidy filing system: in the material de Dios took with him to San Juan was a photograph of the reporter and his source. Cartagena, a pillar of the police force, who in the immediate aftermath of the mountaintop executions had told another officer, "We chopped the heads off the sons of bitches," was, thanks to de Dios, caught in his lie.

> "The couple's bodies were found in a field, raped and neatly chopped into pieces."

De Dios thus collected yet another heavyweight enemy. But the story doesn't stop there. The Senate investigators had good evidence to suggest that the Puerto Ricans involved in the Cerro Maravilla assassinations were part of a larger squad of a type sadly familiar across Latin America. One of the policemen who had assisted at Cerro Maravilla admitted to having been part of a Puerto Rican death squad known as the Defenders of Democracy, which targeted members of the pro-independence movement. The squad's weapons came from the U.S. Marshals Service, their explosives from U.S. Navy stores, and their training from the F.B.I. The same policeman spoke of links with a group of "crazy" and "dangerous" right-wing expatriate Cubans residing in Puerto Rico. In 1979 they had executed a Cuban travel agent, he claimed, whose crime had been organizing tours from Puerto Rico to Havana: Carlos Muñiz Varela was murdered in his car. It was a case that de Dios had hoped for years to solve, and the expatriate Cubans' link to murder and bombings on the island is what de Dios had gone to Puerto Rico to dredge up and expose.

"Manuel talked about the Cubans in his testimony," says Rigau. "He was asked about Cuban terrorism here. He said, 'The only terrorism I know of is right-wing terrorism.' The right-wing Cubans were very annoyed. They regarded him as a traitor." In testifying, says Rigau, de Dios "knew the risks he was taking. He knew it was thin ice."

According to Rigau, de Dios had been digging into the Cubans' relationship to the Defenders of Democracy. He believed that the death squad's activities were partly financed with drug money provided by Cuban exiles.

The right-wing anti-Castro Cubans already hated de Dios. Within a week of his televised testimony, a Cuban exile paper published in Puerto Rico, *Cronica,* viciously attacked him as a Castro collaborator who had a habit of passing himself off to exile groups as a C.I.A. agent. In the same piece, *Cronica* called the death of Muñiz Varela, whom they also labeled a Castro agent, "*ajusticiado.*" "It was a very dangerous article," says Muñiz's former partner, Raul Alzaga. "They were putting de Dios in the gunsights."

"There is a Cuban here, a florist," says Rigau, lowering his voice, "who when he looks to the right sees nothing."

The business card of the proprietor of Florarte, at the corner of Bori and Brema streets in San Juan, reads, JULITO LABATUT, FLOWERS [*sic*] SHOP. Labatut, a famous Cuban exile leader in Puerto Rico, is at his desk, tanned and trim, attended by his bleached-blonde secretary. On the wall beside him is a huge portrait of José Martí, patron saint of Cuban independence. There is also a plaque that reads, "Brigade 2506," the name of the C.I.A.'s secret army that had suffered defeat at the Bay of Pigs.

Labatut, who once stumped up $215,000 in bail for a leading Defender of Democracy member, says he knows nothing of death squads or drugs, and dismisses de Dios as a "mediocre" man who once ran a cleaning service. He has firm opinions about the journalist. "He went to Cuba to have a dialogue with Fidel Castro. The people who oppose Fidel don't believe in dialogue. They think he's a tyrant. There is absolutely nothing to discuss, not now, not in the past, not in the future. We have to remove him by force.... I am very

grateful to America. I am a very good Cuban. The only solution is to kill Fidel. Period." Labatut smiles.

He dismisses the possibility that any Cuban is mixed up in any aspect of Cerro Maravilla. "It's a fantasy, there's no link. De Dios only said he had a lot of information on the case of Carlos Muñiz Varela. He said he was going to publish a book with information on crimes that implicate people here in Puerto Rico. He didn't name names." Labatut stops.

He reaches down under his desk and shuffles through a pile of newspapers. "There's a paper here that says he was a great man." Labatut lifts it up. "The paper is a Communist paper. The Communists say he was great. If the Communists say that, he has to be bad. He wasn't objective. He didn't write about the big trafficker Fidel Castro. Since 1963, that's when Fidel began his drug trafficking. De Dios Unanue didn't mention anything about that, so that's my opinion." Labatut cackles with pleasure. With old-world courtesy, he selects just the right flower arrangement to present as a parting gift.

Before and after his testimony, de Dios spent long hours in Puerto Rico with Senate investigator Gary Pérez, who has spent years fighting powerful interests to gather his evidence on Cerro Maravilla. He was impressed with de Dios.

"In those meetings," Pérez begins, lighting a cigarette on the balcony of the Hilton's tower suite, "we were discussing the networks between the [right-wing exiled] Cubans, organized crime, and intelligence organizations. After Muñiz Varela was killed, de Dios came to Puerto Rico to investigate this. He had," Pérez says, pausing, "*very* good sources. He began to get very close. According to de Dios, the killers felt threatened by him and planned to kill him. They set up a trap in a parking lot [in San Juan in 1979]. Because of luck, some friends [of de Dios's] in the rightist movement went to the ambush, beat [them] up, and informed de Dios." Friends in Puerto Rico attest that de Dios did indeed have sources among right-wing Cubans, who opposed him politically but nevertheless respected him. Pérez raises his voice to compete with the Coast Guard air patrols scanning the beach. "[De Dios] was describing the network of the [exiled] Cubans, the guns, the money. . . . They had a network of financing with drugs."

When de Dios met with acquaintances at La Brasa Colombiana, a restaurant in Queens, after his return from Puerto Rico and a week before his murder, he flourished a large manila envelope. He was, he said, mailing it to the Senate investigators in San Juan. It was his duty. Within were documents, he claimed, implicating the C.I.A., the Puerto Rican secret police, and "authorities at the highest level of the United States" in the crimes of Cerro Maravilla. He mailed the first documents on March 5.

After his death, the New York *Daily News* ran the story of "the envelope." Reporters descended on Pérez at de Dios's San Juan funeral to find out what it contained. Pérez had received nothing, and said so. But two days after de Dios was buried, on March 16, his envelope finally landed on the investigator's desk.

"I don't know why it took so long," says Pérez. "Some of the documents were very interesting. There was a [Freedom of Information] request he had made to the C.I.A. about their ties to Cubans [trained by the C.I.A. in the use of explosives] and a response from the C.I.A. saying they couldn't respond because of 'national security.' There was also a [death threat] letter [from a newly formed right-wing Puerto Rican death squad to an *independentista* leader] announcing that they were making a list to target independence people, the same scheme as the Defenders of Democracy. [A copy of the letter was sent] to the police commissioner in New York from someone on the inside, saying that a group of paramilitaries had been set up." The letter was signed "HASTA LA VISTA HERMANO (DEL DIABLO)." There was a clipping on the case of William Morales, an F.A.L.N. member (a militant Puerto Rican pro-independence group), who blew himself up by mistake in New York and lost his hands and one eye. Since, like other investigators, Pérez believes that most of the "terrorism" in Puerto Rico was police-sponsored, he was intrigued by de Dios's suggestion "that there was a plan for terrorism in New York." They also talked about de Dios's conviction that the New York police knew what was going on.

"I haven't discussed these documents with anyone," says Pérez, "except for one detective from the N.Y.P.D. He arrived a week after de Dios was shot. He took copies of the documents."

Pérez says that he will pursue Cerro Maravilla and all that flowed from it to the very end. He may have to do it alone, since political pressure in Puerto Rico recently brought the Senate hearings to a close. (The committee's findings will be released later this year.)

Meanwhile, the official investigation into de Dios's murder shows signs of running out of steam. Overtime is a big problem for the New York police in an era of strapped budgets. At least one detective still on the case believes that the hit was ordered "in the neighborhood." He is emphatic on one thing: that de Dios's murder had absolutely nothing to do with Cerro Maravilla or anything in Puerto Rico. "If they wanted to get him, they could have done it in Puerto Rico." But he adds, "Don't think just because it was local that small people were involved."

That last answer would have thrilled Manuel de Dios. After cultivating the image of a man marked for death for so long, he would have been less than happy with the notion of being casually dispatched by small people. He had, after all, always wanted to be not just a journalist but a player.

Once upon a time he had negotiated with Fidel Castro, dabbled in the dangerous world of U.S.-Cuban espionage. In his last years—stripped as he was of the influence of *El Diario* and of his radio broadcasts—his world had shrunk to Little Colombia. But here, too, he tried to be more than just a reporter covering the drug problem in his little magazines. He was Manuel de Dios, crusader, seeking, as Cardinal O'Connor claimed, "to turn this city and. . . this nation around." Ethical considerations such as exchanging information with the police, or soliciting free meals up and down Roosevelt Avenue, were not allowed to intrude upon his grandiose self-image.

Cambio XXI and *Crimen* were hardly likely to move the city, let alone the nation. But if Manuel de Dios, journalist, could not shake the world, there was one last coup that could rescue him from obscurity. In the exasperated epitaph of his old friend Moreno, "he was looking for the fucking bullet." In due course, one of the five hundred enemies he had so assiduously courted for so long delivered on his solicitation. He became Manuel de Dios, martyr.

"He was very good. . . *comó se dice, una buena muerte*, a good death to sell newspapers," says Vicky. It was for Manuel an ambition fulfilled. One day, perhaps, the killer who walked away so casually from Meson Asturias will be brought to light. Then, finally, Manuel de Dios will blow the whole thing wide open. □

Wild About Perry

(Continued from page 96) onslaught continues to percolate most strongly. The Museum of Television & Radio recently chose the show's "condom distribution" episode to be included in the museum's permanent collection, and even hosted a screening for Hollywood's movers and shakers at the L.A. County Museum of Art. Moreover, the show's fans span everyone from hip-hype author Bret Easton Ellis, who admitted to Darren Star at dinner one night that he was a secret Thursday-night addict, to the hopeful young Long Island girl who sent an elaborately large Bas Mitzvah invitation to the cast, begging in a handwritten note for at least one of them to show up for the occasion—as if they were all actually her friends.

Audiences have traveled quite a distance from Wilder's *Our Town* to this even wilder address. Or have they?

Diller: "I always thought a serial-like series about Beverly Hills High was a great idea, because I thought it was a small town in both its sensibilities and borders—*very* small-town—while at the same time it was, after all, Beverly Hills. In terms of what that meant growing up there, it was a very interesting thing in that you were both inside a small town and at the same time enormously sophisticated. So I thought that every issue was always going on at multiple levels. . . . I thought, What an interesting arena for storytelling—on one hand very accessible, because all of these teenage problems are, of course, the same, and on the other hand very much an interesting world, because of its Beverly Hills–ness. What I did not realize was just how much those forces, when allowed to cook, would end up being so much about family as they ended up being, because, after all, that is the nature of a small town. It has nothing to do with show business or promoting the thing. That's just the carny barker outside the tent getting you into the tent. Once you're in the tent, you go, 'Oh my God! You mean this is really about *families?*' This is about *family values,* but from all different aspect ratios. Seven or eight weeks into the show, just watching the episodes, it became clear that this was what these shows were about. They dealt with these issues, but they did it without condescension to the children. The thing that you got out of it, that you valued, was this: this is a family groping with contemporary life. That's why it's absolutely caught on. That's completely why. *It honorably and honestly grew.*"

Luke Perry grew up fiercely independent. His family moved from one small Ohio farm town to another, finally settling in Fredericktown, population 2,300, about an hour's drive from Columbus. It was an existence as alien from Dylan McKay's on *Beverly Hills, 90210* as one could have, and explains the "outsider" quality that is as important to McKay's appeal as is the freedom inherent in the character's immense wealth. McKay is a recovering alcoholic, an emancipated seventeen-year-old worth $100 million. (This is the amount left after his father was hauled off to jail for insider trading; his mother, played by British actress Stephanie Beacham, lives in Hawaii.) Dylan was originally supposed to reside in the Beverly Wilshire, "like Warren Beatty," according to Star, who is credited with creating the characters for the show. "I thought there was something kind of sad and exciting at the same time," Star says, "about this world-weary guy who lives in this hotel and goes to high school, but we didn't really play the hotel bit that much."

Perry's mother divorced his late father when Perry was six. "He was violent," Perry admits. "He was a drunk. He treated my mother very poorly. Had I been big enough at the time, I would have beat his ass. But I wasn't. So I always felt that I should have been able to protect her better, but I was a six-year-old kid. That's where my frustration stems from. I saw very clearly as a six-year-old kid what the problems were. Looking back at it all now, it was pretty frightening. I try to reiterate to these people writing the show that these kids ain't stupid. They see. They know. 'Don't be afraid to talk to them about real issues on a real level, because they are fucking way ahead of you.' I was way ahead of them. I saw what was going on. I knew what was happening as much as they tried to shelter me from it. I was *aware.*"

Perry's mother is amazed by the celebrity her son has attained. Last Christmas, local police had to be called to clear away the dozens of fans and photographers collecting on her front lawn, hoping Luke was there. (He had already been and gone.) "Mom's tough," Perry says. "She's a fighter. Her life ain't been easy, but she don't walk around with her heart on her sleeve. She stuck it out. She never bailed." She remarried when Perry was twelve, and he is close to his stepfather, as well as to his older brother, a navy recruiter in Illinois, and his sister, a secretary in her early twenties.

Perry never made it to college, didn't even do well in high school. (His only honor was being voted "Biggest Flirt.") He admits he wasn't a great student, spending much of his time in search of outlets for his creative spirit. He once played the "Freddie Bird" mascot for the football team, and had his stepfather's construction company provide a helicopter so that he could land unannounced on the high-school playing field and emerge to the sound of the crowd's roar in his yellow tights, webbed feet, and bright-red plumage. Another time, he sprang one of his friends from detention by donning a ski mask and pulling a fake gun on the elderly secretary in charge.

"I felt like *another*," Perry says of his time growing up in Ohio, which he left when he was only seventeen. "It was never about escape. It was about wanting to feel like I belonged. I felt like I belonged on a screen. I don't know why. I guess because I related to the people up on that screen much more than the people around me. I always felt like I was one of them and in a matter of time I'd get there."

Perry's first stop was Los Angeles, where he had no luck. He then headed for New York and shared an apartment in Harlem ten minutes from Yankee Stadium with Rocky Carroll, now one of the stars of another Fox show, *Roc.* He finally landed a recurring role on the ABC daytime soap *Loving,* and then a second on the NBC soap *Another World.*

One of the people who befriended him early on in his career was Alexa Fogel, now the director of prime-time casting for ABC. After Perry appeared on *Loving,* he realized he still had a lot to learn about his craft as well as about show business itself, and between his many construction jobs he enrolled in Fogel's audition-workshop class. "The one thing that has always been true about Luke, ever since I first met him, when he was around twenty years old, is that he's always wanted to get better and better," says Fogel. "Considering the fact that he'd already been on a soap and gotten a certain amount of attention for that, I think that's quite commendable. . . . He walks towards that: his commitment to always better himself. There's nothing confrontational about him. He wants to hear how he can get better. He wants to see it. He doesn't have a chip on his shoulder. He never has."

With a bit of money in his pocket, Perry moved back to L.A., but again he couldn't find work, so he laid asphalt for a living. He had met another young actor,

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Alexis Arquette, on a forgettable movie they made in South Carolina, and he moved in with the Arquette acting clan—Alexis, David, Rosanna, Richmond, Mardi, Lewis, and Patricia, whom he fell for immediately. "When I couldn't keep my head above water, they helped me," he says.

Perry admits that he feels truly at home only "any place that I'm alone." He is never *really* alone, for he has frequently shared his mattress with girlfriends. His regular bedmate is his pet Vietnamese potbellied pig, named Jerry Lee. "When I was little," he remembers, "my uncle had a litter of pigs, and the little one, the runt. . . well, the mother rolled over on it and broke its back legs. We had to keep it in the house. And, you know, you just hold it," he says, and in the reflection from the Beverly Wilshire's pool mimes cuddling the tiny thing. "It was beautiful. Pigs are very sweet. There is intelligence in their eyes. Jerry Lee's great. He's been a calming influence on me. I just got a baby. She's a little girl. He still thinks she's lunch—he tries to eat her. Violet is her name. She's a movie star."

"He instantly became the handyman," Alexis Arquette says, remembering Perry's time in his family's home. "He knew about all this menial shit. Now he's doing his own backyard at his new house. He's not paying some contractor. He goes and gets his own bulldozer and drives it around himself. He's very the jack-of-all-trades. . . . I'm not surprised by his celebrity at all. I knew he was bound for it. The moment he stumbled into our wayward little home, he was putting on a show the whole time. He's always entertaining. Even when he's in a bad mood, he's entertaining. It's always fun to hang out with him. Even when we didn't have any money, we'd just do fun stuff. We'd go camping with his pig or go do these big jumps in a four-wheel-drive truck out in the desert. We'd jump off these huge dunes, bottoming out the truck. When the pig was a little baby, it would ride in the front seat with us on these jumping expeditions. That pig would be, like, *airborne*. It looked like we were on the space shuttle for a second, because the pig was just floating counterclockwise. It was beautiful. Luke loves doing mad, crazy shit like that."

"Luke is very campy," says Howard Rosenman, co-producer of Perry's new film, *Buffy, the Vampire Slayer*, a comedy with a feminist twist, which opens at the end of this month. Co-starring Donald Sutherland, Rutger Hauer, Paul Reubens (a.k.a. Pee-wee Herman), and Perry's good friend Kristy Swanson, as Buffy, the film was directed by *Tokyo Pop*'s director and onetime Keith Haring protégée, Fran Kuzui. "He's got a great sense of humor," Rosenman continues. "He has the humor of his generation, really. This project has been very interesting for me, because around him there is this whole bunch of people that are like satellites. It's true stardom. There are all these acolyte best friends. It reminds me of Sean Penn and the Brat Pack. But this is the next generation. On the set every single night, all these young, happening kids—Balthazar Getty and guys like that—would show up."

One night during the filming, Robert Downey Jr. was introduced to Perry. Downey had recently returned from England, where he was playing Charlie Chaplin in Sir Richard Attenborough's film *Charlie*. "So you're The Guy now," Downey told him. Perry was confused, and asked him what he meant. "You're The Guy," he reiterated. "You know, the one that everyone is talking about—all the directors, all the producers, all the girls."

Perry shrugged.

"Get over it," Downey wisely suggested, and they both laughed at the fickleness of it all.

"Anybody who hangs out with drag queens is a friend of mine!" Madonna says of her new pal Perry, one of whose best friends is a renowned L.A. female impersonator, Eva Destruction. (In fact, Perry was up for the part of Georgette, the flamboyant homosexual in *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, and says he went to several auditions in full drag.)

Eva whoops with delight when I tell "her" what Madonna said. "Oh my *God*, Madonna just read me! Madonna read me in *Vanity Fair*. Let's just say anybody who can go on a date with Madonna and not end up in bed with her, I have respect for," Eva says, certifying close friend Perry as the roughneck gentleman he is.

Madonna met Perry a few months ago, at the Beverly Wilshire hotel. She was to receive an award from the American Foundation for AIDS Research in the hotel's ballroom, and Elizabeth Taylor was scheduled to present it. Taylor, however, came down with the flu, and the day before the event AmFAR asked Madonna whom she wished to be Taylor's replacement. Madonna took the opportunity to meet the nation's newest heartthrob. She picked up the phone herself and called Perry on the set of *90210* to ask if he'd fill in. Perry at first thought it was a friend playing a practical joke on him, but was finally convinced that it was not a crank call. ("I know the food chain in Hollywood," says Perry, "and let's just say I don't come directly under Elizabeth Taylor.") Like almost everyone else, Perry was unable to say no to Madonna; he agreed to show up at the benefit after he opened that same night in the play *Love Letters* with Amanda Donohoe from *L.A. Law*. Madonna greeted him onstage with a full lip lock, and there have been romantic rumors about the two ever since.

Like the decadently talented diva, Perry offers no apologies for his choice of companions. "In any collaborative effort, you have to look past what people represent and what they look like, because you need them for what they do and what they can bring to whatever it is you're doing artistically," he says. "I don't care if they're gay. I don't care if they're black. I don't care if they're black and gay and a drag queen. . . . If they inspire me, those are the people I want around. It took me a while to make that adjustment."

What he has never had to adjust to is his ability to get along with women. Perry has always had a respect and an abiding love for them. Though he's "not fucking around these days, because I got a girl" (one he keeps a secret because she has nothing to do with show business), he does theorize on why he's so successful sexually. "What I've found is that I'm very in touch with my feminine side," he says in his distinctively soft, corduroy cadences. "I ain't got no problem saying that. Any good actor is. And any good lover is. Meaning that women don't always want to be manhandled. A lot of times they want to be made love to by a man who can do it softly, like a woman. I've found this to be very true. Freud said that everyone has latent homosexual tendencies. I believe they are not so deep with women. Women by nature are more affectionate. They are more physical. They are more motherly. I'm kinda like that, too. . . . They can talk to me about a lot of different things. I think that that is one of the things that they find appealing about me. . . . If they want John Wayne, I can give them John Wayne. But most women want a little more—someone who has some sensitivity, who'll take some time." Perry pauses. "There are a lot of times that people will misconceive me as being gay when they first meet me."

Has he ever experimented sexually with another guy?

"Flat out on the record? I never have.

"If they want John Wayne, I can give them John Wayne. But most women want a little more."

I've been singularly heterosexual my whole life. So big deal. Most people have. But to not recognize that there is some homosexual element out there is ridiculous. And don't recognize them as some scourge. But see them for what they have to give as people before you define them by their sexuality. Especially in show business: it's a fag-o-rama! The gay people who bother me are the ones who are offended that you take notice that they are gay. To me, it should be as open to conversation as anything else. But because I'm the handsome leading man, everybody wants to get in my closet and find out I've been a fag. . . . I can understand why Tom Selleck sued the *Globe*. Because that's business. People think Tom Selleck's gay, then they're not going to be showing up to see his movies. They just took a lot of money out of his pocket. They have no right to do that simply on conjecture. If they have facts, if they have pictures of me fucking some guy, fine—then they can say whatever they want."

"I am product! Hear me roar!" Perry exclaims facetiously at one point, carrying his Selleck argument to its logical conclusion. He is so much a product, in fact, that he has become betting material. Over a meal, Madonna and Barry Diller wagered a cool million that Perry was only five feet nine inches tall. Their dinner partners, David Geffen and Sandy Gallin, bet them he was taller. Perry claims to be five feet ten. "I thought he was small and powerful," Madonna says. "I guess he's medium and powerful." She fully intends to pay up her share of the wager. "Well, I don't," says Diller. "I profoundly don't. Talk about coals to Newcastle."

Perry can joke about his role as a piece of male merchandise, but he refuses to be used. On the second day of the L.A. riots, he was on his way to Warner Bros. to have a meeting about a film he's interested in making. Driving to the lot, he got a call informing him that Warner's, like other studios in town, had closed early because of the possible danger from the riots. But since he was already on his way to Warner's, one of his agents from CAA asked him if he wouldn't appear at the "Walls of Justice" press conference, which was scheduled to take place shortly on the lot. He immediately agreed, and arrived to find Wesley Snipes, Anjelica Huston, Sean Penn, Joel Silver, Richard Donner, and an assortment of other concerned inside-Hollywood types gathered to voice their opposition to the Rodney King verdict and plead for calm. Organized by the Hollywood Policy Center, and involving CAA, the Hollywood Women's Political Committee, and other political and entertainment interests, the event walked a dangerous line between social activism and a photo op. Perry was well aware of this line, and he exited the press conference when he overheard publicists on the telephone telling their clients that they better get down to the Warner's lot, because the group had turned out to be A-list after all.

Beverly Hills, 90210 has been an A-list hit for only a little more than a year, but Fox and Aaron Spelling, whose company produces the show, are cashing in. This month brings not only new summer episodes of the Thursday-night drama but also the first episodes of *90210*'s spin-off, *Melrose Place*, on Wednesday nights. If *90210* is *teensomething*, then *Melrose* will be *twentysomething*. Down the road, when the *90210* characters go off to Southern California colleges, Spelling tells me, he has plans for yet another spin-off, with a younger cast that will have already been integrated into the series. Viewers can then choose between *90210: The College Years* and *90210: The High School Years*.

Spelling also owns the merchandising rights to the show—Fox claims it owns none—and he's been busy this past year lining up one product after another: clothes, school supplies, posters, boxer shorts, books, jewelry, trading cards, even a group of Barbie-like dolls based on the *90210* characters. Manufacturers such as Mattel, Procter & Gamble, and Smith-Kline Beecham have become involved with the show. Even the Coca-Cola Company has been in discussions about tie-ins. (This is all understandable, since last summer's new episodes attracted a whopping 69 percent of the female teenage audience.) But if Spelling gets greedy concerning his merchandising arrangements, won't he risk cutting into the show's cool factor? "This is a terrible thing to say," admits Spelling, "but the truth is it gets down to financial problems. The licensing fees on Fox aren't as big as on the other networks, and you either have to make the show cheaper or you do merchandising. By the way, I don't think young merchandising lasts that long. We're trying not to do anything vulgar."

Who would have thought that "the little show that could," as the series' executive producer, Charles Rosin, refers to *90210*, would become such a sensation? Fox didn't yank the show initially when it debuted opposite *Cheers* with dismally low ratings, because the network had nothing with which to replace it. But once the show began to catch on with teens, Fox brilliantly promoted it. In fact, the success of *90210* converged with the success of the network itself. Fox is now the number-one-rated network among teen viewers, and rates as high as NBC and CBS among adults eighteen to thirty-four. These are the most advertiser-friendly of demographics, and from its inception Fox has unabashedly courted them. "The goal of the network was to try to differentiate itself from NBC and CBS," claims Fox Broadcasting Company's president and chief operating officer, Jamie Kellner. "The majority of their viewers tend to be fifty-plus. ABC less so than NBC and CBS. Our hope was to provide a service that younger people would look at as their network, the first new network that was designed, in effect, for them. . . . Teenagers have become very important. We are trying to work those areas much harder than the other networks are right now. To do a program that is about teenagers, which really focuses on their lives, is something that the other networks probably couldn't or shouldn't do, given their program formula. But for us it's money in the bank."

Though Kellner is accused of being the conservative voice in the corporate mix when it comes to pulling *90210* back from the riskier subjects it dramatizes—AIDS, racial tensions, drug abuse, and, of course, the episode on Spring Dance night in which Dylan and Brenda have sex, a

Wild About Perry

plot twist that Kellner now says was a mistake—he does go on the record more strongly than anyone else involved in the show as being in favor of approaching social issues head-on. "Without them, it would be a very unimportant show," he admits. "I think that the kids in some cases look to it to begin a dialogue with their parents about things. If you look at the demographics of who is watching, it's not just teens. It's teens going all the way up into the mid- to late forties. So that says to me that it's teens probably with their parents. It probably becomes one of the few times during the week where they stimulate a discussion. We know that from the mail we get—this program is something that the family shares together. . . . I remember being a teenager, and the last thing I thought that I wanted to do was necessarily talk to my parents too much, because they were just going to get in my way. If anything, the demographics tell us that this show is letting each side get into the other side's head."

Does Kellner think there is a danger that too much merchandising of the franchise will cut into its popularity and hurt its ratings, thereby hurting Fox itself? "I think that if the show isn't good, then I would say yeah, it does. If the show's good, I don't think you have to worry about it. But I know what you're saying. When young people watch things, they think it's theirs. And all of a sudden, you know, like 'the Man' is starting to put Luke's picture on things, so it's not cool anymore."

There's no need to worry. Luke Perry's coolness is not fashionable; it is innate. Like his beloved pigs, the guy was born with the intelligent eyes of a movie star, though the carnal knowledge embedded there seems quite a bit older than the quarter of a century he admits to having lived. His famously furrowed brow has taught millions of teenage girls to read between the lines in ways they never thought possible. (The scar that divides his right eyebrow, which he actually got in a freak bowling-alley accident as a boy, simply adds to his physical mystique.) Smaller than expected, Perry's body is scrawny, a quick scrawl of flesh. He's fashioned a kind of awkward tilt of his pompadoured hairdo while delivering his lines on- and offscreen that conveys an enchanting aw-shucks-I-just-want-to-make-love-to-you nonchalance. Indeed, Perry gives better head cock than old pro Reagan.

Many show-business experts don't take him seriously, however, and constantly compare him to the teen idols of the past with their pseudosexual poses. But since he possesses the quiet irony of a bantamweightier gang—Bogart, Cagney, even that other Ohio boy Paul Newman—he could easily surprise his detractors.

Perry longs to portray the late rodeo rider Lane Frost in a dramatic motion picture, so why would he choose a campily hip movie like *Buffy* for his first film since he's become so popular? "I don't take myself that seriously. I don't always have to be *this guy*. I thought that was a real good way for me to show that. I'm in no big hurry to have my name above the title of a motion picture just because I'm commercial or marketable." Fox, on the other hand, was prepared to scrap the picture unless Rosenman signed him for the motorcycle-riding rebel in the film. Perry describes his supporting role by saying, "I'm the damsel in distress," and he smiles at the thought.

Has such sudden, massive fame been a kind of crisis for him? "I've enjoyed the shit out of it. There have been problems, but who am I to bitch about that? The long and short of it is that right now people think I'm a patsy. They think I've lucked into this, that I don't know what's going on and they can take advantage of me—in business and otherwise. . . . I'm not in this for my ego, and not out to become the biggest, baddest dude on the block. But I will get what's coming to me, and I will be treated with respect. It's just that simple. But I find a lot of people don't want that. They either want me to be real subservient or they expect me to be cocky. I don't think I'm either of the two."

No, he's a seducer. Coy, after all, is his real first name—Coy Luther Perry III. So, Coy, what is the gestalt of being the lone focus of millions of teenage sexual fantasies? Perry's grin turns downright evil in the afternoon sun. His voice takes on a shadowy edge. "You think it's sexual?" he asks. "To quote Anthony Hopkins in *The Silence of the Lambs*. . ." He pauses, then, pinching off his words, summons the voice of Hannibal Lecter: " 'Do you think they picture sexual scenarios?' "

Yeah, they do. Yet adults keep coming back to the same question: Why Luke Perry?

"He's a wonderful *listener*, a lot of fun, much brighter than I expected, and needless to say also very attractive," Maria Shriver tells me. She interviewed the young actor for her NBC show and is an expert on the trials and tribulations of celebrity. "He's amazingly humble, and he's handling success much better than most people I've met—especially that kind of success."

"He has a sweet sexuality," says Rosenman. "I haven't seen anything like Luke since Tom Cruise. Luke and Tom have the same effect: they are deferential, they are polite, they are well mannered. They are *pros*. They are very similar in certain ways."

"A good part of *Beverly Hills, 90210* is that it's got someone for everybody. It could be he's someone for certain *noisier* people," says Diller. "Come on, he's the hooker with a heart of gold. It's always been the most appealing character. Now, you may translate it into a man or whatever, but it's a guy who's living life somewhat darkly who's *sweet as hell*." □

Earth Angel

(Continued from page 93) she saw in the part. "Tina Turner!" she answered like a shot. "I *love* Tina Turner!"

The first time I saw *The Blue Angel* was at the old Cinémathèque Française in Paris. In the audience was a small, inscrutable-looking white-haired man. I was a student, and he, Josef von Sternberg, of course, had made the picture, which sent Marlene Dietrich into orbit. The next time I saw the film, I was also with Sternberg, but now I was his student in California, writing a Ph.D. dissertation on the seven astonishing films they made together. I saw all seven with him, and listened to the bitterness in his voice as he informed me, "I am Miss Dietrich. Miss Dietrich is me."

I spent long hours with him in his garage in Westwood, which he had converted into a library-den that was a kind of personal shrine. The walls were lined with hundreds of books, each with a little blue piece of paper marking mention of him. He loved to take them down and read them aloud—the more viciously dismissive they were of his great career, the better. It was his way of proving to an admiring student that he had survived his

critics and somehow survived the woman whose huge blown-up photographs filled the space between the bookshelves and the ceiling. They were the most beautiful photographs I had ever seen of Marlene Dietrich, each one inscribed "Without you I am nothing" or "You god, you" or "From the creation to her creator."

I knew even then it wasn't that simple. If there was a single great love story in offscreen movie history, this was it.

In 1929, Josef von Sternberg was in Berlin, looking for an actress who could make believable the degradation of a respectable bourgeois professor played by Emil Jannings, then considered the greatest dramatic actor in the world—and do it with a song. It was vital that she be able to speak English as well as German, so that the film we now know as *The Blue Angel* could be certain of the American market. The search for Lola-Lola, as she was called, would be equaled only by David O. Selznick's search for Scarlett O'Hara a decade later.

Sternberg had seen and rejected virtually every actress in Berlin. One he had not seen, because she was in rehearsal for the biggest musical of that season, he would see almost by accident, because two other players in the musical had already been signed for his film. The musical was called *Two Bow Ties,* and he went to see it with everyone connected with the picture, but without his wife, who had accompanied him to Berlin for their second honeymoon, and who remained in the hotel because she did not understand German.

As it turned out, the leading lady of the musical played an American dollar princess, and almost the first line she spoke, announcing the number of a winning lottery ticket that set the plot in motion, was in perfect English: "Three—and three—and three!!—Three cheers for the gentleman who has drawn the first prize!" She acted vaguely bored, and she was elegant but louche, with heavy-lidded eyes and a musical, throaty voice.

As Sternberg watched the play that night (he would forever after dismiss it as a "skit"), what he saw and heard changed film history and his life. What he *said* when his colleagues turned expectantly to him to gauge his reaction was "*What?* That untalented cow!" But what he dreamed was Marlene Dietrich.

When she appeared for the audition she would claim she never cared about, some intuition may have told her she already had the part. She was almost brazen with affected indifference, perhaps because she saw herself in ingenue roles of the sort Elisabeth Bergner had become the rage in. (Bergner knew this, and her silky response was "If I were as beautiful as Dietrich, I wouldn't know what to do with my talent.") She told Sternberg she photographed badly, got bad press, had made three films and was no good in any of them. Sternberg wasn't entirely taken in. He thought she had made nine pictures (it was twice that many). The show he had seen her in the previous evening was her twenty-sixth theatrical production. Moreover, she was a twenty-eight-year-old wife and mother.

Her husband was a thirty-two-year-old man-about-town and production assistant named Rudi Sieber. Their open marriage was common knowledge in Berlin, where Marlene had acquired—and kept—the sobriquet "the girl from the Kurfürstendamm," in spite of having been a mother since late 1924. When her daughter was little more than two, Marlene had left Berlin to follow matinee idol Willi Forst to Vienna, where she worked in theater and films and turned down young Otto Preminger's entreaties to leave Rudi for him.

She had returned to Berlin instead, and created a sensation singing a lesbian duet (which became her first recording) onstage in *It's in the Air,* the hottest ticket in Berlin in 1928 until *The Threepenny Opera* demoted it to number two. She was also a ubiquitous figure in Berlin's gay bars, perhaps because her husband had become involved with a Russian dancer named Tamara Matul, with whom he would spend the rest of his life.

When Sternberg said he wanted to test her, she agreed on the condition he see the three films she admitted to, and added gratuitously that she had seen *his* films and didn't think he knew how to direct women anyway. This was as breathtaking and brazen and insolent as Lola-Lola herself would have to be. He saw her films and knew he had been right, but to establish who was puppet and who was puppeteer, he insisted on making a test. She arrived showily unprepared, without costumes or music. Sternberg called for a pianist, pinned her into a spangled costume, frizzed her hair with a curling iron, and let her sing for his cameras. "She came to life and responded to my instructions with an ease that I had never before encountered," he said later. "Her remarkable vitality had been channeled."

So had his aesthetic attention and romantic obsession. Marlene never even asked to see the test. She knew. The picture—the most expensive sound picture yet made anywhere in the world—was meant to be a star vehicle for Jannings. Scenes were shot first in German, then in English, and the effort for Jannings sometimes showed. Marlene had fewer problems, because she had already made recordings and understood the microphone. Sternberg allowed her to use the full range of her voice, the full wattage of her personality. His filming of her song sequences was shrewd; he mostly turned on the cameras and let her perform. She knew what she was doing and needed only a setting and an audience, and everybody from Buster Keaton to Max Reinhardt dropped by to hear Emil Jannings talk and stayed to hear Marlene sing. Something was happening on Stage Five at UFA, and everybody in Berlin wanted to see it for himself. The day Leni Riefenstahl arrived with a director friend, Arnold Fanck, Sternberg was shooting Marlene singing "Falling in Love Again." At one point he screamed, "You sow! Pull down your pants; everyone can see your pubic hair!"

The premiere, on April 1, 1930, remains one of the most memorable nights in screen history. She went directly from her ovations on the stage to the boat train to Bremen, and set sail for America, still wearing the gown in which she had taken her bows. She sailed alone, leaving her husband and daughter behind.

She may have been the first woman in the world famous for being famous. Before her ship docked in New York, Paramount had started erecting billboards bearing nothing but her photograph and the words MARLENE DIETRICH—PARAMOUNT'S NEW STAR.

She was introduced to A-list Hollywood by Paramount production head B. P. Schulberg at the Beverly Wilshire hotel, at a party to celebrate the engagement of Schulberg's assistant David O. Selznick to Irene Mayer, daughter of Louis B. Irene Selznick remembered, "There was suddenly a silence, a suspended silence. . . . Then these high double doors at the end of the ballroom opened and in walked Marlene. No one had ever laid eyes on her before. She entered several hundred feet into the room in this slow, riveting walk, and took possession of that dance floor like it was a *stage.* It was something out of a dream, and she looked absolutely sensational."

She also looked absolutely sensational in *Morocco,* her first American picture, released in this country before *The Blue Angel.* Sternberg subjected her to dietary and physical training with groomers, in-

cluding Sylvia of Hollywood, who claimed to massage away not only fat but cartilage too. He supervised a makeup makeover by Paramount's Dotty Ponedel, who elevated and winged Marlene's eyebrows, lengthened and darkened her upper lashes, and drew a white line along her lower eyelids to "open" her eyes, making them seem larger and drawing attention away from the "Swanson," or "duck nose," that had always bothered her, on which Ponedel drew a fine silver line that caught the light and "straightened" it.

The transformation was more than skin-deep. Sternberg shook her free of the notion that she was anything like an ingenue, and his personal feelings for her focused the femme-fatale component. She not only liked it—she lived it. Not surprisingly, Mrs. Josef von Sternberg noted this and filed suit for divorce on the grounds of alienation of affections. Marlene's own affections by then, however, were directed not at Sternberg but at her *Morocco* co-star, Gary Cooper, which did not go unnoticed by Sternberg.

The publicity about Paramount's new love goddess was packing them in all over the world. So was speculation about Marlene's private life, aroused by the most startling scene in *Morocco,* in which, dressed in top hat and tails, she kisses another woman full on the lips. Sternberg understood and exploited Dietrich's androgynous, even bisexual, appeal by having her take a rose from the woman she kisses and nonchalantly toss it to her leading man. There was nothing accidental about this. Sternberg knew from the time he had spent with Marlene in Berlin that she welcomed admirers of both sexes, and that some of her liaisons had in fact been quite notorious. Paramount's having trumpeted that she was also a loving mother tended to undercut the implications of the top hat and the kiss. It also confused observers, who wondered about the true relationship between "Svengali" and "Trilby," as the press insisted on calling Sternberg and Marlene. It didn't confuse Sternberg's wife, who announced, "He is madly, heart and soul, in love with her!" He was not alone, said Lupe Velez, Gary Cooper's fiery paramour. Sternberg's re-creation of Marlene from plump, rowdy Lola-Lola into the elegant siren who follows Gary Cooper barefoot into the desert was so successful that even Louella Parsons said, "There is a definite likeness to Greta Garbo, although Miss Dietrich is prettier."

Miss Dietrich also could sing, had legs, and was not in the least reclusive. The so-called Garbo-Dietrich rivalry was never much more than a Paramount-MGM rivalry. Sternberg's greatest contribution to Dietrich's screen image was to convince her and audiences that she was unique. No rival—not Bergner, not Garbo—could compete with the exquisitely beautiful seductress he saw in her, and he knew that if he could convince her of that her ferocious ambition would do the rest.

Morocco's release was followed in America by *The Blue Angel* and *Dishonored,* their third collaboration—all within four months, a one-two-three punch without precedent in motion-picture history. Scandal almost never diminishes curiosity about a love goddess, but Paramount (knowing that Dietrich's husband was already living openly with another woman in Berlin) thought it a good idea for Marlene to bring her child to America before she began her role in Sternberg's *Shanghai Express*. When the six-and-a-half-year-old Maria arrived, Marlene announced that she was four, and Paramount released a photograph of them that had been published in Berlin when Maria really *was* four.

No one will ever forget Dietrich's immortal line in the next film: "It took more than one man to change my name to Shanghai Lily." What Great Depression audiences may not have realized, but Sternberg surely did, was that Shanghai Lily's real name was Madeline (the German for which is Magdalen), and that Marlene's real name was Marie Magdalene, which she had shortened in childhood to Marlene. Here Sternberg perfected the streamlined, dangerous Dietrich, the exquisitely beautiful temptress half-hidden behind veils that give away nothing but her mocking smile. She is decked out by designer Travis Banton in costumes of no period that became as notorious as her dialogue: trunks of black egret feathers, black veils, black chiffon, black marabou. From then on, she was just Dietrich, and Paramount billed her that way.

Their next film, *Blonde Venus,* was a failure, and may very well have been Sternberg's vengeful message to Marlene—even though she wrote the screen story. It tells of a woman who leaves her husband to go off with a rich and powerful man (played by the young Cary Grant), kidnaps her child, and sinks to prostitution, which paves the way to her becoming the toast of Paris. In the end she discovers that the wages of sin are Everything She Has Ever Wanted. The buried theme of the film is beauty and the beast in one, which is made clear in the ultimate camp sequence, "Hot Voodoo"—even Shirley Temple did a parody—in which the blonde Venus emerges from a gorilla suit, only to appear later in a white version of top hat and tails.

After five pictures together, there was strain in the relationship, aggravated by an ongoing series of affairs Marlene had with Maurice Chevalier, Brian Aherne, and Rouben Mamoulian (who directed her next film, the tastefully dull *Song of Songs*), not to mention Garbo's inamorata, Mercedes de Acosta.

They reunited for *The Scarlet Empress,* their most dazzling film. Sternberg treated the story of Catherine the Great as a pure study of sex and power. Catherine as a child was played by Marlene's daughter, Maria, for whom Marlene had acting ambitions. Sternberg photographed most of the picture himself, including a five-minute-twenty-second wedding sequence with no dialogue. Dietrich was never more beautiful on-screen, never so *iconic*, with close-ups so extreme they frame only her eyes and nose behind veils so expertly photographed you can count the fibers in their weave. No camera was ever more in love with any woman than in this extraordinary sequence, and no woman ever yielded more serenely to its worship.

The Scarlet Empress seemed utterly irrelevant to audiences in 1934, who were flocking to *It Happened One Night*. The next year, Sternberg distilled his obsessive feelings in their last film together, *The Devil Is a Woman*—a title (dreamed up by Paramount) rejected by Sternberg, though it perfectly expressed the film and the relationship between director and star. The studio itself announced that the film was a disaster before it was ever released. Sternberg's goddess had become too distant and unattainable for Paramount's audience. Sternberg told the press he would make no more pictures with Marlene, and he let Marlene read it in the papers.

"I failed him," his puppet would say. It would have been truer to say that she had never been in love with him. She was fiercely loyal to him, but that could not compensate for the deeper, unreciprocated longings. He was never unaware of her other relationships, some of them conducted on his own sets, and her thinking him a genius did not ease the torments of nonpossession.

For the rest of her life she called him "the man I wanted to please most," but he was not kind to her in his memoirs. He admitted that all of their pictures were to some extent autobiographical, except for the most obvious one of all, the one he resisted acknowledging until the day he

died: the story of an erudite professor destroyed by a heartless cabaret singer and vamp who is always "falling in love again," but never with him. He told the actor Sam Jaffe that he could do anything with Marlene but make her stop loving him. He may even have believed it. If he did, his leaving her was the closest he could come to saving himself from what was and always would be unrequited—except on-screen.

She had pleased him—or not—for six years. Those years destroyed him, and made his reputation forever.

"Dietrich" had been created by Josef von Sternberg, but Marlene had a life of her own. Within a year, she would be the highest-salaried woman in the world, and over the next forty years she would make twenty-nine more films. No other star worked with so many great directors—Billy Wilder, Alfred Hitchcock, Ernst Lubitsch, Orson Welles, Raoul Walsh, Mitchell Leisen, George Marshall, Fritz Lang, Tay Garnett, William Dieterle, Stanley Kramer, Jacques Feyder. And Maximilian Schell, a co-star from *Judgment at Nuremberg,* who managed in the early eighties to make a full-length documentary about her, against her will and without photographing her, using only her voice on the sound track. The legend Sternberg created was so durable because it was, in fact, built on the real Marlene. The erotic sophistication, the androgyny, the cosmopolitan wit and intelligence, were not fantasies projected on a screen so much as they were essences of a woman too richly and unconventionally constituted to be focused even in the camera eye.

Away from the cameras, she was, if anything, more Marlene than films could say. She was a devoted mother and grandmother, and loved to be known as a hausfrau. Her loyalty as a friend and her nearly ruinous generosity became as much a part of the legend as her glamour and style. Her friendships had an intellectual basis as often as a romantic one, though she took her reputation as a seductress seriously and loved to shock people with her exploits from school days on, with both men and women. She had a standard answer when people asked whether she preferred men or women: "Women are better. But you can't *live* with a woman." That was why she could form famously close attachments to people as different as Ernest Hemingway, Edith Piaf, and Noël Coward. (When I asked her if she and Hemingway had been lovers, she answered straightforwardly, "He never asked me.") Her significant affairs amounted to what was called the Dietrich alumni association, which included Erich Maria Remarque, John Wayne, George Raft, John Gilbert, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., Lieutenant General James Gavin, Michael Wilding, Michael Todd, Yul Brynner, Alberto Giacometti, and Jean Gabin. At the same time, she was emancipated enough to enjoy her own sex unabashedly, and while the beautiful Vera Zorina turned her down, that group of Hollywood women known as Marlene's sewing circle—Lily Damita, Ann Warner, and a number of well-known Hollywood figures who are still living—did not. Marlene's affairs could be casual to the point of being careless. Her brief fling with Fritz Lang ended when she reached across the pillow to pick up the phone and make a date with another man.

"There is a definite likeness to Greta Garbo," said Louella Parsons, "although Miss Dietrich is prettier."

She was also capable of profound attachments, as with French actor Jean Gabin. The two lived together off and on between 1942 and 1946, in both Hollywood and Paris, and she often told people he was the great love of her life. When Gabin insisted on marriage, she demurred. Gabin was insanely jealous, demanding a kind of conventional relationship (including children) Marlene was not prepared, finally, to accept. Nor was she prepared to become Madame Gabin and stop being Marlene Dietrich.

Being Frau Sieber, however, had not slowed her since Maria's birth in 1924. Rudi was the perfect husband and the perfect excuse when other relationships threatened her independence. She got jobs for him and helped support him and his mistress as long as they lived. He died in 1976, shortly after the onstage fall that was widely assumed to have ended her concert career. "Marlene's career died with Rudi," one colleague said. "Everyone assumed her broken bones were the end, but not *her!* It wasn't her health that stopped her; it was Rudi." William Blezard, Dietrich's English musical conductor, who was with her when she fell, told me, "She was shattered when Rudi died. She always claimed she worked for Maria and the four grandchildren and would go on until she dropped, but after Rudi's death she said, 'I can't go on,' and I knew that was the end."

"Marlene swamped Maria with love," Douglas Fairbanks Jr. told me. "That poor child, who hardly knew who or where she was." Being Dietrich's daughter would have been a burden for any girl, let alone one who had been left behind when that ship sailed for America in 1930. She overate famously when she was a youngster, perhaps to avoid comparisons to her mother, whom she played as a child in *The Scarlet Empress* for the man she saw as her chief rival for her mother's attention if not affections, Josef von Sternberg.

When Maria came into her own as an actress in the days of live television on shows such as *Studio One,* she remained Dietrich's daughter. Though married and the mother of four sons, Maria Riva, as she was now called, could never truly compete with the radiance of Dietrich. She retired from acting in 1957 to raise her children. She and her family moved abroad, though they kept the town house on East Ninety-fifth Street in Manhattan that Marlene had bought for her.

In January 1992, two weeks after Marlene's ninetieth birthday, the world press was filled with reports of a book Maria had written about her mother. The front page of the London *Sunday Times* announced: DIETRICH'S DAUGHTER BETRAYS STAR'S SECRETS. Marlene Dietrich threatened to sue her own daughter to prevent Knopf from publishing the book before her death, which came four months later.

What Dietrich was to her daughter will soon be a matter of record. What she was to the world is already on the record. Her depth as a woman of courage and conviction and her freedom from the artifice of Hollywood were certified on the battlefronts of World War II. She became an American citizen and literally faced death for her convictions, braving rejection by her homeland, which has be-

gun only now to comprehend the meaning of her sacrifice. She entertained on beaches, in forests, in bombed-out ruins, in hospitals, on the backs of jeeps, under direct enemy fire. Her work for the troops called on all those years in the theater before Josef von Sternberg ever laid eyes on her, and forecast what would be her last and greatest career.

In 1953, her status as the most glamorous woman in the world was so unquestioned that, when asked to perform for a cerebral-palsy benefit, she acted as ringmaster, in top hat and silk stockings, for the opening of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus at Madison Square Garden. She so dazzlingly stole all three rings that she was invited to repeat her appearance in Las Vegas, and decided—as always—to give them a little more than they expected. At fifty-one, she walked onto the stage at the Sahara Hotel in a gown she had designed together with Jean Louis that was mostly sequins and rhinestones, strategically scattered over what was all Dietrich. Hedda Hopper led the standing ovation, and announced to the world, "Christmas came early to Las Vegas!" Overnight, Marlene became the highest-paid, most desirable nightclub act in the world. Soon only theaters could contain the entirely new legend she was building to add to those of the screen goddess and the warrior, and for that she found a second Svengali.

Burt Bacharach, at thirty, looked like a leading man, was well connected in show business (his father was a newspaper columnist), had composed a few unremarkable tunes, but was chiefly known as a savvy arranger who had worked for Mel Tormé, Vic Damone, and Imogene Coca. He had the good luck to meet Marlene at the Beverly Hills Hotel when he was suffering from a cold, inspiring "Marlene Nightingale" to ransack her luggage for vitamin C and tender remedies.

He listened to Marlene's voice and set it in sound as Sternberg had set her face and body in light and shadow. He knew her voice had a narrow but serviceable one-and-a-half-octave range. It needed support, not cover, and a surround that would lend variety and color to what might otherwise drone to monotony. He haloed it with strings, boosted it with bass, encouraged her to let go with the surprising power hidden in her slender diaphragm. He added sparkle to her tone, lightened and loosened her rhythm, and forced her to swing.

He let her keep her standards, but added drive and shimmer and Broadway pizzazz. "My Name Is Naughty Lola" became more playful, "Lili Marlene" less portentous, "The Boys in the Back Room" flat-out, belt-it-to-the-balcony comedy. The show gained in variety and texture what it lost in familiarity. New songs helped update the image: "You're the Cream in My Coffee" was a teasing prank; "My Blue Heaven" became airborne romance; "One for My Baby" (straddling a chair and smoking a quarter-to-three cigarette) was relaxed, boozy-bluesy; "Makin' Whoopee" winked and nudged; "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face" was daring, with no gender change in the lyric. Bacharach let her croon, he let her belt, he let her purr and insinuate and suggest and toy. He even changed "Falling in Love Again." Her showy anthem got simple, with just a modest piano escort (his). After a full evening of *acting* songs, he made her throw it away. It became the intimate, scrawled signature at the bottom of a love letter, the one she had been writing with her lights, shadows, costumes, and songs for the whole evening.

By 1960 she was acknowledged to be the greatest solo turn in the world. She was ready to go home.

Berlin had been the site of her first triumph, but, though she was the most famous German woman of the century, many of her countrymen had never forgiven her for what they considered her betrayal in World War II.

Bacharach provided new arrangements for nearly a dozen German songs she had never sung in concert before. She knew from the forest of MARLENE, GO HOME! posters in front of the theater that this might be the toughest audience of her life. She displayed a dignity that rose above the fray without ever apologizing for the convictions that had driven her to risk her life and in the process save many others. Her performance was romantic, full of show-biz swank, but utterly unyielding. She asked no quarter and gave none until the end of the show. Then she pulled from her songbook a graceful closing number, "Ich hab' noch einen Koffer in Berlin" ("I Still Have a Suitcase in Berlin"), a nostalgic song that allowed a hint of homesickness.

Willy Brandt leapt to his feet. He was joined by the 1,400 others, cheering. By the end of the tour, in Munich, even standing room was sold out. She entered to what the press called "a hurricane of applause," and at the end did encores until there were no more, and then bowed that deep head-to-the-floor bow for an incredible sixty-two curtain calls.

Every important German review was a love letter. MAJESTY IN SWANSDOWN, one was headlined. "She is a legend. . . fascinating as a woman of the world, of the intelligence, of the spirit," another said. Munich's most important paper informed the skeptical, "Yes, it is true. [She is] ravishing, devastating—but the miracle of the image takes second place before the miracle of the performance—and that before the miracle of the personality. All together, this adds up to the miracle of Dietrich."

"Miracle" was not too strong a word. In Los Angeles a few years later, shortly after I finished my studies with Josef von Sternberg, I saw Dietrich happening, rehearsing on a stage with Bacharach and twenty-six musicians for four straight days. No detail was exempt from her attention, her correction. She drove the musicians and technicians as she drove herself, tirelessly, without complaint or drama. She exhausted every opportunity for improvement, every orchestra member on that stage, everything but her apparently inexhaustible self. Her sensitivity was so great that she could feel if a spotlight two balconies up was too hot or too cool. She could tell if a microphone had been moved a quarter of an inch while she was at lunch.

At the end of thirty-two grueling hours, Bacharach thanked his musicians and announced that rehearsals were over. Dietrich stood facing the empty theater (where I crouched unseen in the top row of the uppermost balcony) and gave her pre-opening speech to the orchestra. "All right," she said. "All right. Burt says rehearsals are over, it's time to stop, time to go, and Burt knows. He knows your union rules and your own rules; he knows your freeways and your lawn sprinklers and your swimming pools and your televisions, your standards and your aspirations. And so you must go home to your little wives in your little houses in the hills or the San Fernando Valley. I am prepared and willing to stay here all night. All night and all tomorrow too. To get it right. To justify this thing we are doing, this act of theater. But no. Your pools and martinis and television sets and wives are waiting, so never mind. Never mind that we open tomorrow night before the most cynical audience in the world. And we are not ready for them. But go. Go home and relax. And as you do, think that we open to-

morrow night, and tomorrow night will be''—her voice hushed to near inaudibility—''a disaster.''

It was, of course, one of the greatest triumphs Los Angeles had ever witnessed.

Creating triumphs was by now her stock-in-trade, offstage as well as on. Mike Nichols observed that Marlene was the only woman he'd ever spent an evening with who never looked in a mirror once: ''She didn't have to; she got it right in advance.'' Concealing the enormous cost it took to get it right was part of her professionalism. She was both admired and notorious for her self-punishing ordeals in having what looked like simple street clothes made. She drove seamstresses and couturiers to distraction. For the public Dietrich, her discipline and demands took on the aura of mania. When she and Jean Louis created her famous concert dresses, she thought nothing of standing before a mirror nine hours without a break as costumes were literally built on her body, sequin by sequin. ''She hated symmetry,'' Jean Louis told me, ''and a sequin here might make a symmetry with a rhinestone there, and we'd have to redo the whole thing until it was perfect.''

For her Tokyo concerts, she checked into the Imperial Hotel and delivered her order to room service: twelve wastepaper baskets, thirty-seven luggage stands, an ironing board, an electric typewriter, twenty-four telephone pads and pencils, a hot plate, a saucepan, double-strength light-bulb replacements, blackout curtains, floodlights for makeup and dressing. Hotel staff were allowed in her rooms only in her presence, and *never* in the room where her costumes or foundation garments were laid out. She made herself up at the hotel. She had used tape ''lifts'' under her wigs since the early forties, and as she entered her sixties, she learned to braid her hair and attach the braids to tiny surgical needles, which she then pulled tight and imbedded in her scalp. She daubed the pierced skin with over-the-counter antibiotic ointment to prevent infection from her stage wigs. Only then would she apply the stage makeup that created the illusion of agelessness. To help the process along, in 1961 she underwent ''fresh cell'' therapy in Switzerland. Her care for her body went all the way back to her apprentice days in Berlin, when she took boxing lessons to keep in shape. She was capable of starving herself to stay slim and satisfying hunger by self-induced vomiting in order to eat her cake and not have it, too.

In 1965, at the Edinburgh Festival, she learned that the man on whom she depended for *amitié amoureuse*, as she liked to call it while stroking his hair for photographers, was leaving her.

Bacharach had always wanted to be a composer. She had known that, but in their whirl around the globe she had discounted how much he wanted a settled life with marriage and children. He had found the woman with whom to settle, film actress Angie Dickinson.

Marlene had known the day would come, which did not lessen the shock or rage when it did. Dickinson had gone to London to meet Bacharach and travel on to Edinburgh. A healthy sense of dread sent her to Clive Donner, director of *What's New, Pussycat?*, for which Bacharach had provided a hit song. She asked him to come along for company while Bacharach conducted, ''but really for moral support,'' intuited Donner.

> Mike Nichols said Marlene was the only woman who never looked in a mirror on an evening out: "She didn't have to; she got it right in advance."

''Marlene went into a fury,'' he told me, ''more in sorrow than in anger, perhaps, but it looked and sounded a good deal like anger.'' Another observer shuddered and closed his eyes, remembering what he said ''was not a pretty sight.'' Donner was struck by Dietrich's voicing ''a certain helplessness without Bacharach that was completely contradicted by the imperiousness of her rage. She told him he was ruining *his* career. Not by leaving her to compose and conduct for films, but by marrying someone who wasn't a *star*. It was as if she were thinking in the third person like an adviser or agent, and he had chosen a nobody over Marlene Dietrich! I wondered what her reaction would have been if he had said, 'Marlene, I'm leaving you to marry Garbo.' She might not have been so outraged.''

Nothing could stay the performance, however. Donner remembered they ''got through the evening somehow. We left the theater and piled into a limousine at the stage door, where hundreds of fans were waiting. Dietrich had a clutch of signed postcards with her photograph in the famous gown and slipped them one by one through the partially open window of the car. She kept telling the driver, 'Slower, slower,' and then, just as we reached the corner where the car had to turn, she shouted, '*Fast!*' and as the car turned the corner, she released a great arc of hundreds of these postcards. They fluttered through the air like ticker tape at a parade. The fans dove after them as Dietrich sat back and smiled. It was a brilliant display of theater. Angie Dickinson couldn't do *that*.''

She had gone on without Sternberg. She went on without Bacharach—calling on his deep and genuine loyalty to her when occasion demanded, such as her triumphant 1967 and 1968 Broadway appearances, when she was billed as ''Queen of the World.''

She was endlessly self-contemporizing. She could sing Pete Seeger and Bob Dylan as movingly and persuasively as she could Cole Porter and Harold Arlen. She had no competition, and knew it, and loved being Marlene Dietrich. She liked to say she knew her limitations, but that was never the same as accepting them. She made what she did look effortless, because that's how great artists do it.

On May 6, she fell asleep forever in that apartment on the Avenue Montaigne. It was the day before the opening of the 1992 Cannes International Film Festival, which was dedicated this year to Dietrich—image, legend, woman. Dietrich's Dietrich.

Kiosks all over Paris bore ads for the festival, with her image as Shanghai Lily. Along the Avenue Montaigne itself, that beautiful face shone from poster after poster over the milling crowds of photographers, fans, and the merely curious waiting for the quite inconceivable news that the Blue Angel had folded her wings.

Her exit on the day before the Cannes festival's opening must have pleased love's old warrior. It made it impossible for filmdom's gaudiest self-celebration to begin without celebrating *her*.

Talk about timing. □

Rodney King

(Continued from page 82) case. . . and it turns out where [King] was staying was right down the hill from where I live," says Pasadena attorney John Burton, a Police Watch co-chairperson. "I was flipping out. I was saying, 'Oh, please, I've got to get this case!' "

But the rush to represent King was by no means limited to members of the brutality bar. The jail where he was being held for resisting arrest suddenly looked like an American Bar Association convention. "It was just a circus," says Robert Rentzer, a criminal lawyer in Los Angeles. "Everybody was trying to get a piece of Rodney."

But they were too late. Someone had gotten there ahead of them.

The attorney who'd already landed King's signature on a retainer agreement was not a member of the brutality bar, nor was he known to have ever tried a civil-rights case. The legal community was stunned when it discovered that Steven Lerman, a P.I. specialist, had signed the client.

"We in the police-misconduct bar in Los Angeles just consider [King's] hooking up with Lerman to be one of the great tragedies of the twentieth century," said one disappointed lawyer, "sort of up there with the Moscow trials and the sinking of the *Titanic*."

How did Lerman get the case? He refuses to say, citing attorney-client privilege. Angela King, who was privy to the decisions being made in the early hours of her nephew's trouble, says that Lerman was suggested to the family by Warren Wilson, a reporter at Channel 5—the station that had the Holliday videotape first.

Wilson, one of the best-known black reporters in town, has been a fixture on local television for years. He also has a law degree, although he has not yet passed the California bar exam. Wilson says that he does know Lerman, and that Lerman's name was one of several he mentioned to the family while he was covering the story.

The question of propriety seems obvious, but attorney Stephen Yagman, a police-abuse specialist who practices in Los Angeles and New York, says that reporters routinely steer potential clients to lawyers in L.A. "A lot of lawyers in this community, including me, have tie-ins with people in the media, people I'm buddies with. And if people say to them, 'Do you know a lawyer?' the reputable reporters will say, 'I can't recommend a specific person, but here are the names of three or four people who do this.' The less reputable ones will say, 'This guy here is the best guy there is.' I've gotten maybe 30 percent of the cases we have from people I know in the media."

However Lerman got King, once he had him he held tight. Rentzer, who was hired by the family to handle Rodney's criminal charges, says he had an agreement that he would have a hand in the development of King's claim against the city. When the criminal charges were dropped, Rentzer says, "Lerman manipulated me out of the case." "I would deny that I chased him out," Lerman says.

But the elbowing to get close to Rodney was not limited to lawyers. Rodney's new fame caused a bitter rift within his family over such suddenly relevant matters as movie rights and merchandising—not to mention who would get to go on *Donahue*.

Rodney's mother, Odessa, is a deeply religious woman whose faith prevents her from getting involved in matters of this world—a category in which her son's legal case securely fits. She stayed in the background, and insisted that her four other children, also Witnesses, do so, too. That left a void, which Aunt Angela and Kandyce Barnes, the aunt of Rodney's wife, Crystal, struggled to fill.

Kandyce had two advantages—she was well spoken and, through Crystal, she had Rodney's ear. Angela says there have long been class tensions between the two families. "They had some money, they had a home, and [to them] we were just slums—you know, lower-class people. . . . They just pushed their way on in there."

A month after the beating, Kandyce and Steven Lerman went to New York to appear on the Phil Donahue show, and, speaking for the family, she told the national television audience that Rodney was "very paranoid." She said that he awoke in the middle of the night, screaming, "Don't beat me! Please leave me alone!"

Aunt Angela went ballistic over the *Donahue* show: "These little aunts and the in-laws, they get on there like they've been knowing Glen. They don't know him. No, no. No way. . . . These people are snakes." And her antipathy was not eased by the events that occurred next.

Kandyce, saying that she had experience in negotiations, persuaded Rodney to let her guide him as he chose among offers to buy the rights to his story. The company she selected was an unknown newcomer, Triple-7 Entertainment.

James Banks, the Triple-7 vice president and lawyer, describes it as "a motion-picture producing company, as well as a television production company and a book company." Actually, that is a hopeful assessment. So far, the company has produced only a how-to-make-your-child-a-star video, due out this summer. Banks says that Triple-7 "consists of people who have been in the entertainment business for many, many years," but "because of their involvement in other projects they do not want to be known at this time."

The company was officially formed on May 1, 1991, two weeks before it signed Rodney King. "As you can imagine, in the beginning, the bidding was horrible," Banks says. "Everybody and his little brother was coming out of the woodwork to buy these rights, from one coast to the other."

And how was Triple-7 chosen? Kandyce says that she merely acted as a "go-between" for King, sorting out and presenting him with the various offers, and that Triple-7 emerged as the best choice. Banks, however, says that Kandyce approached Triple-7 through a mutual friend, one of the silent partners. "It boiled down to the confidence in the friendship, in the relationship, that did it for [King], no doubt about it in my mind," Banks says. He adds that Kandyce may get a co-producer's credit on the movie and the mini-series Triple-7 plans to make. ("I'm flattered to hear that," says Kandyce.)

Apparently, King had no advice on the negotiation except for that of Kandyce. Steven Lerman says he did not participate. And Aunt Angela knew nothing of the deal until after Rodney had signed it. "He was not even well yet—that's what made me sick."

But, Banks notes, "the document involved is as good as any Philadelphia lawyer could put together. It's a bona fide contract." Banks declined to say how much Rodney was paid for signing the contract. Angela says she heard it was $20,000.

And what did Triple-7 get for its money? "Rights to Rodney King's story," says Banks, "lock, stock, and barrel."

For Banks, an entertainment lawyer, and his partners, the King signing represented a magic entry into the big leagues, and to say he is enthused does an injustice to his enthusiasm. "I mean, what else can you compare this to? I don't think there's anything else. Not since those boys [the Founding Fathers] signed that other document [the Constitution].

"Without sounding theatrical, it has such an impact that, to do the story, it ultimately has to be a feature film for the rest of the world. Domestically, probably a mini-series. A three-night mini-series on him." That is not all. There will be a book. "There are really two books, I should say. There's the *making* of the story, and the story. Because the making is almost as interesting as the story."

Banks has an idea in mind for a T-shirt: "I think Mr. King's statement. . . 'Can't we work together?' Glen's statement was a beautiful statement. And I think that, with his picture, would be very apropos." Meanwhile, Banks is busy writing "cease and desist" letters to bootleggers using Rodney King's face or name without a license, and he has an investigator tracking the pirates down.

All of which leaves Aunt Angela—and, she says, the rest of the King family—out in the cold. "We're looking at millions and millions of dollars," she says. "And everyone's trying to find out who's doing what. Everyone except for his own immediate family. And he can't see this."

With books and movie projects and the multimillion-dollar civil suit all in the works, King became a valuable commodity. But his partners soon realized that he was also a risky investment. In May 1991, with the ink still not dry on his Triple-7 deal, King drove to Hollywood, where, in a dark alleyway, he engaged the services of a transvestite hooker. As luck would have it, two undercover L.A.P.D. vice cops were watching this particular prostitute, and they moved in for the pinch. King tore out of the alley, nearly running over one of the cops. He then stopped a patrol car, told the cops about the incident, and was arrested for assaulting a police officer with a deadly weapon.

Lerman maintains that the assault charge was a setup by the L.A.P.D., which was bent on discrediting King. For its part, the state attorney general's office decided against filing charges. "We felt that it was a defensible case, considering that they were undercover and there wasn't a reasonable conclusion that [King] knew they were police officers," says Deputy Attorney General Peggy S. Ruffra, who handled the case. "There was some reasonable doubt as to whether he was trying to run over the person or just get the hell out of the alley."

Still, nobody denies that Rodney King was in that alley with that hooker—"I'm his lawyer, not his conscience," Lerman says. And soliciting hookers in dark alleys was not the ideal way for a man with a multimillion-dollar civil suit pending against the local police to be spending his leisure hours. King's minders realized it was imperative to keep him from getting into any more awkward circumstances. But Lerman prefers a different emphasis. "Rodney King doesn't need a keeper," he says. "Rodney King needed protection from those that would do him harm. And the fact that he was set up [in Hollywood] underscored his vulnerability."

King has told people he's miserable in his cloistered life. "He's just kind of jittery," Angela said after a recent visit to Ventura County. "He asked me to come out there; he wanted me to sit and talk with him awhile. He gets lonesome, and I know how it is—you know, your family not around."

> "Rodney King is a victim," Lerman says, "and my intention is that Rodney King never become political fodder."

But Lerman has convinced King that he needs his lawyer's shroud to survive. "He's mindful, because I've told him that there are people out there that know their place in history could be assured if they took a shot at him," Lerman says. "I have to take Rodney King and. . . say, This is what's good for him. Not good for him because he likes it, or he agrees with this or that. I enjoy a dialogue with him that's unique."

Lerman says that he has made King "part of my life," and that he has spent "hundreds of thousands" of dollars of his own money on the case so far. Lerman's colleagues and competitors are in awe of the effort. "I mean, he's basically put King on a salary," says one. "He seems like he doesn't have any other cases. It's quite remarkable."

The tight rein has clearly accomplished several crucial goals. If King's life is really in danger, it has kept him safe so far. And it has kept away other lawyers. "There were many attorneys chasing him down, trying to solicit the case, trying to dissuade him from continuing to have Lerman represent him," says Rentzer. Lerman has also successfully kept at bay leaders of the black community who have sought to give King a more public role in confronting racism. "Rodney King is a victim," Lerman says, "and my intention is that Rodney King never become political fodder, never become ammunition for somebody's agenda."

It's safe to guess that Rodney King was a reluctant volunteer when he made his famous plea for peace outside Steven Lerman's office two days after the cops' acquittal. "He was terrified," says James Banks. Reporters and TV crews, two hundred strong, had assembled. An L.A.P.D. helicopter hovered overhead. Los Angeles and the nation were waiting to hear from the man in whose name the city was being burned. Dozens of people had already died, and although the National Guard and Mayor Bradley's dusk-to-dawn curfew had quieted the town, the wrong signal from Rodney King could easily ignite another explosion. In fact, someone from Bradley's office called Lerman just before King's appearance for assurances that King would do nothing to heighten tensions.

Wearing a blue jacket, blue slacks, and a blue shirt, King walked into the sunshine on Wilshire Boulevard and said:

"People, I just want to say. . . can we all get along? Can we get along? Can we stop making it horrible for the old people and the kids? . . . We've got enough smog here in Los Angeles, let alone to deal with the setting of these fires and things. It's just not right. It's not right, and it's not going to change anything.

"We'll get our justice. They've won the battle, but they haven't won the war. We will have our day in court, and that's all we want. . . . I'm neutral. I love everybody. I love people of color. . . . I'm not like they're. . . making me out to be.

"We've got to quit. We've got to quit. . . . I can understand the first upset for the first two hours after the verdict, but to go on, to keep going on like this, and to see this security guard shot on the ground, it's just not right. It's just not right, because those people will never go home to their families again. And I mean, please, we can get along here. We can all get along. We've just got to, just got to. We're all stuck here for a while. . . . Let's

try to work it out. . . . Let's try to work it out."

And then, taking no questions, he was escorted back inside. It was a remarkable performance, and none were more pleased with it than Steven Lerman and James Banks, who had advised King as to the tone, and even the phrasing, of his words.

"I told him that there are certain things that people will probably want to hear him say," notes Lerman, "but that what he said would ultimately be his decision."

"The telephone lines were really buzzing," says Banks. "Glen and I talked just like two guys sitting around just shooting the bull, as to what we wanted to come out of this. We talked about Dr. Martin Luther King. And I said, 'Glen, you know, I was there when he made that speech, "I have a dream." ' I wasn't physically there, but I was around then. And I never dreamed that one day I would be associated with a speech that is a thousand times more important, in all due respect to Dr. King. . . .

"And we talked about the phrase—and I'm so glad that he said it—I said, you know, 'Glen, this is just a battle we lost, but we're gonna win the war.' And I was very pleased that he talked about that. It had a strong resonance. And the one that was all his own was when he said, 'Can't we work it out? Can't we work together on this?' That was right from the heart. That tore everybody apart."

While King's plea seemed to guarantee the peace, it brought a near-universal reaction: Why didn't this man testify at the trial?

"He would have been a fantastic witness," Lerman says, "a *fantastic* witness." King himself later criticized the decision not to call him to the witness stand.

Deputy District Attorney Terry L. White, who prosecuted the four cops, gets edgy when he hears statements like that. The case had been a political nightmare for the D.A.'s office—which ordinarily works with the police department, not against it—and it was White, still only in his thirties and far from the department's most experienced assistant D.A., whose career might be on the line.

White had to have heard the gossip that District Attorney Ira Reiner, a veteran L.A. politician, chose him, a black attorney, as an insurance policy. If they lost the case—unlikely as it seemed, with that videotape as evidence—"the black community would have to trash one of its own to get to Reiner," as one L.A. lawyer puts it.

Almost from the beginning, the question of whether to call Rodney King as a witness was a central dilemma for White and Reiner, and the subject of intense debate for weeks. All but Lerman agree that, on some obvious levels, King was a vulnerable witness. Not only was he an ex-con—and if he'd taken the stand, the defense would have tried to explore his conviction for a violent crime—but he'd also been drunk the night of the beating and had led police on a high-speed chase, running lights and driving erratically along the way.

Moreover, King had rendered his testimony "impeachable" by giving inconsistent statements on several key points. He made early statements that he hadn't been speeding and that he'd pulled over immediately—statements contradicted by one of the passengers in his car, Pooh Allen.

In his early interviews after the incident, King said he couldn't identify the officers who'd beaten him, but later he identified all four defendants in the criminal case. "You know, my memory is coming back," King explained to the D.A.'s investigators. "I've been able to, you know, think at times and my brain, you know, it would come back different parts, different little parts, little bits."

King's most glaring contradiction was on the matter of whether the officers uttered racial epithets while they were beating him. At his first press conference, on leaving jail, King said that there had been no racist remarks, a statement he repeated to the police investigators. Lerman said the same thing, as did Rentzer.

But as Lerman shaped his civil suit around civil-rights violations, race became a central point. King now told the D.A.'s investigators that the cops had stood over him, taunting, "Whatsup, how're you feeling now, nigger? Whatsup, nigger? Nigger, whatsup, nigger, killer? Killer, whatsup, killer? Whatsup?" He also said that when he got up and tried to run—a moment, according to the defense, that showed he was belligerently resisting arrest—it was because an officer had said, " 'I'm gonna kill you, nigger, run!' . . . And when I heard that, when I heard that, that's when I was gonna break for the fucking, for the hills." That would have been especially useful testimony in the trial, except for the fact that King hadn't mentioned it earlier.

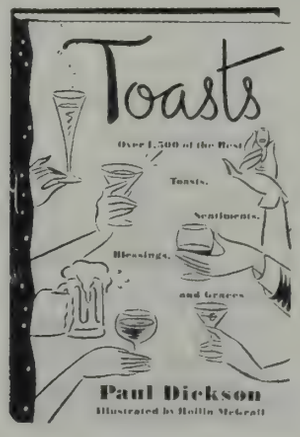
Lerman explains that Rodney was afraid at first to charge racism because he thought the police might railroad him into jail and never let him out. He also says that Rodney's mother requested that race not be made an issue in the case.

Then why did Lerman subsequently charge racism so loudly? Lerman's critics, including the district attorney's office, lay it off to inexperience in civil-rights cases, and the mistaken belief that racial animus has to be part of a violation of rights. (In fact, most excessive-force claims are based on a section of the U.S. Code that says nothing about race; rather, the civil right being violated is the individual's Fourth Amendment right to be free from unreasonable search and seizure.)

Lerman says he brought race into the case after hearing a sound-enhanced version of the Holliday videotape on which the racial epithets could be heard. The district attorney's office, which also hired a sound-enhancement expert, says that no racial taunts could be discerned. "I don't think this is malicious on Rodney's part," White says of King's changing story. "I think Rodney's been manipulated to believe these things. And I don't know if it's just Steve Lerman. I think he's been around so many people he actually believes what he is saying now."

White also faults Lerman and his associates for accompanying King to meetings with the D.A.'s office, where they would

"I used to know a clever toast,
But pshaw! I cannot think it—
So fill your glass to anything,
And, bless your souls, I'll drink it."



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"help" him answer questions. "We'd ask Rodney a question, and Lerman would say, 'Well, you remember you told me, Rodney...' I didn't know where Rodney's memory started and Lerman's memory ended."

White finally got his time alone with King in late January, with the trial nearing, and he did not like what he saw. King was inarticulate, moody, inconsistent in his answers, and quick to anger at what White considered the easiest lobs. "You could see the anger and the frustration, I mean a lot of anger, coming out during these questions. And he was still on medication at the time...and he was getting very angry about these really not very hard questions."

White imagined the impact on the jurors if King were to lose his temper in court. And then, when the trial started, something happened that sealed his decision not to put King on the stand. Melanie and Tim Singer, the husband-and-wife Highway Patrol team, testified that they had not struck King. "Lerman calls me on a Saturday morning and says, 'Rodney wants to talk to you,' " White recalls. "And Rodney got on the phone and he was a very angry person. Profanity spewing out. He was angry, saying, 'Melanie Singer kicked me, Tim Singer kicked me, and they're lying!' It was 'Fuck this,' and 'Motherfucker that,' and right then I knew we had made the right decision."

The defense team later said it had earnestly wished for a chance to go at King on the witness stand. "We were very disappointed in the prosecution's decision not to call him," says a member of the team, John Barnett. "We really would have enjoyed cross-examining him." The irony is that, no matter what sort of witness King made, the violent aftermath might have been avoided if he had testified. If he'd been a convincing witness, he might have clinched it; if he'd been as bad as White feared and defense lawyers hoped, he'd have been discredited and the acquittal would have been less shocking.

King may yet tell his story on the stand, when Officer Laurence Powell, who was not acquitted by the Simi Valley jury, is retried. But many doubt that a federal case, revived by President Bush in the politically charged hours after the acquittal, will ever materialize.

Which leaves King's multimillion-dollar civil-rights suit. Scheduled for October, it may never reach court. Lerman wants a settlement for King, and the city seems eager to oblige.

City Attorney James Hahn is said to be more worried about winning the case in court than losing it. "That's a hell of a bad settlement posture to be in," observes one attorney associated with the case. " 'If you don't settle with me, there'll be a riot.' "

In early settlement talks, there was some distance between the two sides: a source reports that the city offered $2 million, with a hint of going to $3 million, while Lerman asked for $10 million plus an annuity, which would give King an income for life.

Even if the city does come much closer to Lerman's figure, say, $7.5 million, King will see only a portion of the settlement money. First he'll have to pay off his lawyer, and if Lerman has the usual one-third contingency agreement, that will make his fee about $2.5 million. If Lerman deducts cash advances made to King, the cost of the twenty-four-hour security force, living expenses, and so on, King's take will be shaved even further. He will also likely have to pay the considerable medical bills he has accumulated from private doctors—including the psychiatrist, a plastic surgeon (he's already had facial reconstruction), and a neurologist.

While the two sides haggle, Rodney King remains in his cocoon, safe from incident, and from rival lawyers. James Banks is keeping vigilant watch over Triple-7's investment, and Aunt Angela is still stewing over the family's being shut out in the Rodney King sweepstakes.

"Everybody else is out there making money with Rodney King and no one's saying nothing. And here I am, the main source of the family, and you gonna tell me I can't make a few T-shirts and sell them? I talked to Rodney about it. He told me...if I could make some money for the family, then go ahead, because it'll be a while before he'll have any."

In May, Angela finally decided to go ahead and get into the Rodney King business on her own. She cut out a picture of her nephew from the newspaper, traced it onto a white T-shirt, and painted on his hair and mustache. She planned to sell the shirts for six dollars—a bargain next to the bootleg Rodney shirts that sell in South-Central for ten dollars.

But then she got a message on her answering machine that caused her to reconsider her T-shirt project. The call was from James Banks at Triple-7.

"Apparently," said Banks's recorded voice, "some people are selling T-shirts of Glen.... As I'm sure you're aware, the rights for Mr. King are with my client..." □

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Editor's note: In the June issue, the earrings on page 123 were by Temple St. Clair Carr, and the photo of Jann Wenner and friends on page 127 was by Patrick McMullan.


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Planetarium

CANCER ♋ *June 22–July 22*

The recent crashing of Uranus and Neptune through your 7th house hasn't done much to satisfy your need for constancy. And these planets have probably had a drastic effect on your self-esteem. It pains you to admit how dependent you really are, but deep down you must know what an overcooked vegetable you could have been all these months if you had been totally on your own. Here's good news for a change: In early July the moon's south node passes out of your sign, and it won't be back for nineteen years. Personal pride will return to normal, and a casual glance at the mirror will no longer inspire nausea.

LEO ♌ *July 23–August 22*

This could be a fun month, full of friends and socializing, provided you're willing to play the strong, nurturing figure, ready to wake up at five in the morning in order to feed an infant or help an old fuddy-duddy to the john. This may not be the most glamorous moment in your life. It's about real commitment—all the day-in-day-out stuff, through all the ups and all the downs. The message of Saturn's retrograde through your 7th house is the following: Show up and be there for other people, whether they reciprocate or not. This applies to all Leos, even rock stars, bank presidents, and politicians.

VIRGO ♍ *August 23–September 22*

Here's a little exercise for those scientific Virgos who still doubt the validity of astrology. When Mercury, the planet that rules you, transits Cancer between June 9 and 25, you'll be happy just dining with friends or doing volunteer work, content simply belonging to the great human family. And you are human, whether you like to admit it or not. As Mercury enters Leo and your 12th house on June 26, however, your needs will change. You will thirst for intimacy and the thrill of a secret, stolen kiss. You don't have to lose face by admitting to such emotional yearnings. Except to yourself, of course.

LIBRA ♎ *September 23–October 23*

The new moon on June 30 should help stabilize your position immeasurably. Your career house is probably still rocking from major political overthrows, not to mention the irritating state of the economy or the condition of your domestic scene. It may seem as if it will take thirty lifetimes to straighten out your personal life, and even then it may require that you stay home changing emotional diapers. This is not the case. It's simply that right now you have to take time out from your public life to steady that shaky person you need to care for. Wobbling or not, be the picture of success in July.

SCORPIO ♏ *October 24–November 21*

Venus transits Cancer from June 19 through July 12, and that's the perfect time to add a little of nature's own sweetness to your harsh personal ironies and absurdly crushing responsibilities, all flavored with Scorpio angst. Sometimes you really need to be taken by the hand into a field of buttercups and reminded that not every single minute of your life needs to be a netless high-wire act over the Grand Canyon. So take a tour of the French château country, go for a leisurely trip along the Amalfi coast, or just go clip a few hedges someplace—anyplace at *all* where you can hear a couple of crickets.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ *November 22–December 21*

Many Sagittarians are demanding to know about their love lives these days. Even those who long ago resigned themselves to living out a staid existence somewhere over the last hill are getting pretty damned sick and tired of being hounded about their finances—by loved ones, financial advisers, and astrologers. Well, the new moon in your 8th house on June 30 kicks off a month that will not be filled with just wills, tax problems, and credit-card debt. The 8th house rules passion, sexuality, and, for Sagittarians, breast stimulation. Given those conditions, July should prove to be quite interesting.

CAPRICORN ♑ *December 22–January 19*

Thanks to Venus's being in your solar 7th house from June 19 through July 12, a beloved someone will calm your fevered brow—or at least give it the old college try. You're not usually comfortable on the receiving end, cast in the role of the patient being ministered to by a sweet little night nurse. Nonetheless, a certain somebody will fix you an icy shrimp platter and a tall cool drink, maybe even with an umbrella and a strawberry in it. In your current state, it may be a little hard for you to relax totally and accept such loving kindness, since at this point you feel more like a bristling porcupine than a honeybun.

AQUARIUS ♒ *January 20–February 18*

It's possible that you've gotten so far into your own head lately that you are in some danger of suddenly popping out of your belly button. With so much internal bubbling going on from Saturn in your 1st house and Uranus and Neptune in your 12th, it will take some time and lots of patience to work yourself out of the box you're in. But leave that alone for now. While the faster-moving planets sweep through Gemini, Cancer, and Leo—your 5th, 6th, and 7th houses—this summer, step up and step out. Get out of your head. Quit worrying if you're going to make it. Just go ahead and make it.

PISCES ♓ *February 19–March 20*

Saturn is transiting your 12th house, and will be there for the next year. That's what's currently making you as vulnerable as a dandelion blowing in the wind. Loved ones, however, don't always dig that faraway sadness in your eyes, and are getting a little tired of it. So get off the grief kick and get into love. Spend time with the kids. The new moon on June 30 heralds a month when you should try to summon up some of the old glitz. This is a time for you to take a chance. Get out on that floor and dance. If you don't own a getup with sequins on it, buy one now, even if you have to do it through the Home Shopping Network.

ARIES ♈ *March 21–April 19*

Those who are irked by your seeming superficiality might say that all your running around and endless telephoning are *not*, as you claim, necessary aspects of your busy life but just your way of avoiding being at home. Yet how else could you possibly have behaved while Mars was in Aries, and Venus and Mercury were in Gemini? Around the time Mars plunks down in Taurus, on June 14, Venus and Mercury slide into Cancer, and by the time the new moon rolls around on June 30, you'll have quieted down considerably and started doing adorable homey little things like barbecuing and screwing on brand-new bathroom fixtures.

TAURUS ♉ *April 20–May 20*

You're usually so peaceful and docile that it takes you a while to realize when you're mad, much less do anything about it. You prefer lounging in the hammock and licking something cool to getting up and mowing some creep down with the mower. But Mars enters Taurus on June 14, and that means *act!* If you've been on a slow boil about work, health, love, or money, for God's sake turn up the fire and do something about it now. Mars does run into Saturn and Pluto the first week of July, so you'll see that for every action there's a reaction. Never mind. Get off your butt and burn some fat.

GEMINI ♊ *May 21–June 21*

Few people could actually go shopping for kitchen appliances while seriously considering relocating to Sri Lanka. You could. Especially when Mercury transits Cancer and the moon is full in Sagittarius on June 15. Then when Mercury hits Leo on June 27, you'll reverse your plan and decide there's no place like home, get a nice soup cooking on the stove, and suddenly rush out for a night of partying. Those close to you had better realize they will never be able to figure you out. It's the old Gemini dilemma: how in the world could you possibly keep all your selves happy?

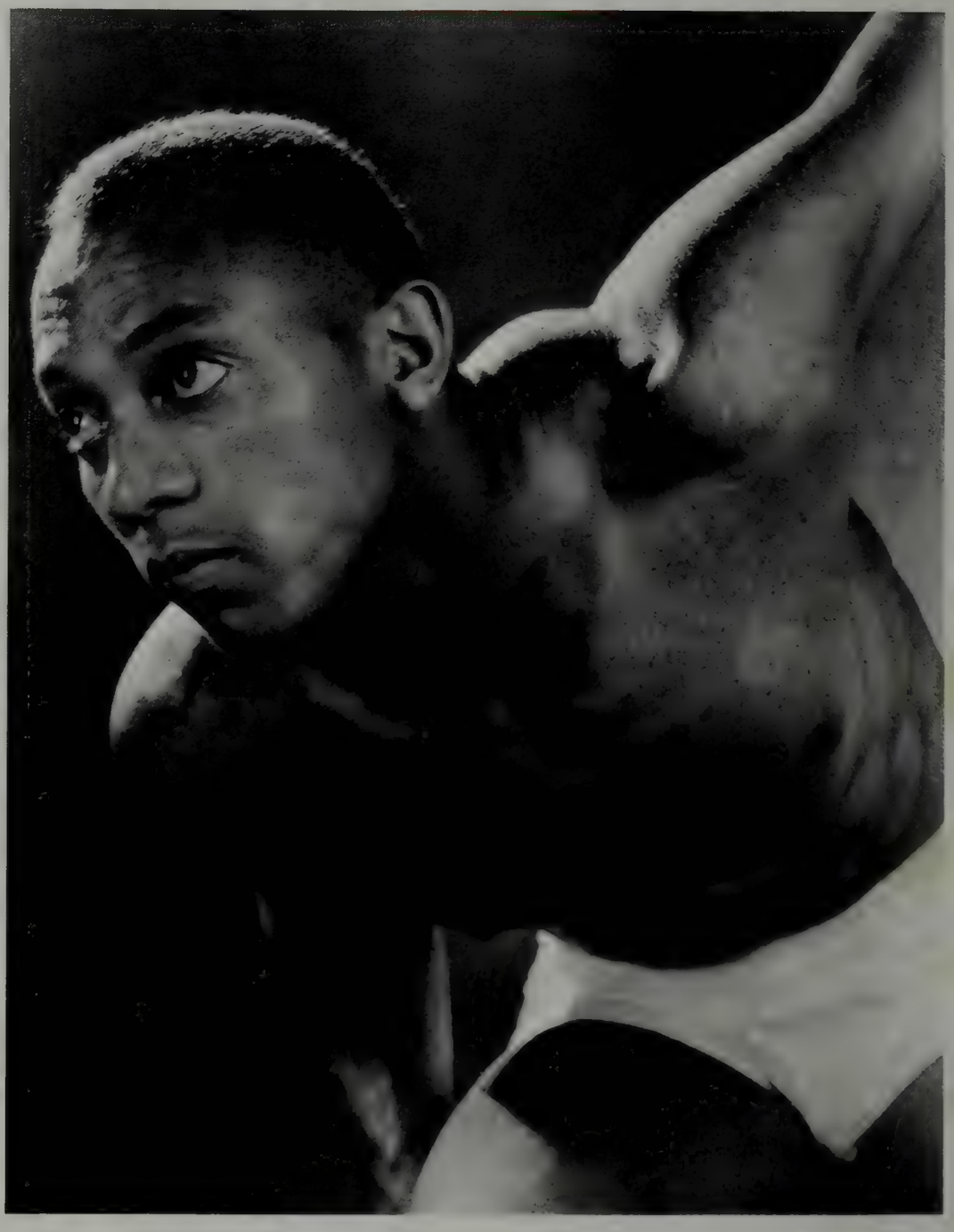
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Jesse Owens

Vanity Fair
September 1935



Competitive sports are "war minus the shooting," noted George Orwell. And Jesse Owens, one of the finest athletes of the century, fought some of the toughest battles. The youngest of thirteen children born to an Alabama sharecropper, Owens became an overnight sensation at age twenty-one, when on May 25, 1935, he matched one world record and broke three more—all in the space of an hour. By then the revered athlete was a sophomore at Ohio State, where he was barred from dorms and restaurants, worked nights pumping gas, and was subjected to medical tests to see if blacks were preternaturally endowed to run fast. But Owens found his moment of glory at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. With a fierce grace immortalized in Leni Riefenstahl's controversial documentary *Olympia*, Owens triumphed over Hitler's Aryan will by winning four gold medals and setting three records—including an 8.06-meter long jump, which was not beaten until 1960. This month the twenty-fifth Olympiad opens in Barcelona, where the thirty-one-year-old Carl Lewis is scheduled to run for the gold once again in the categories Owens made his own.

Photograph by NELSON

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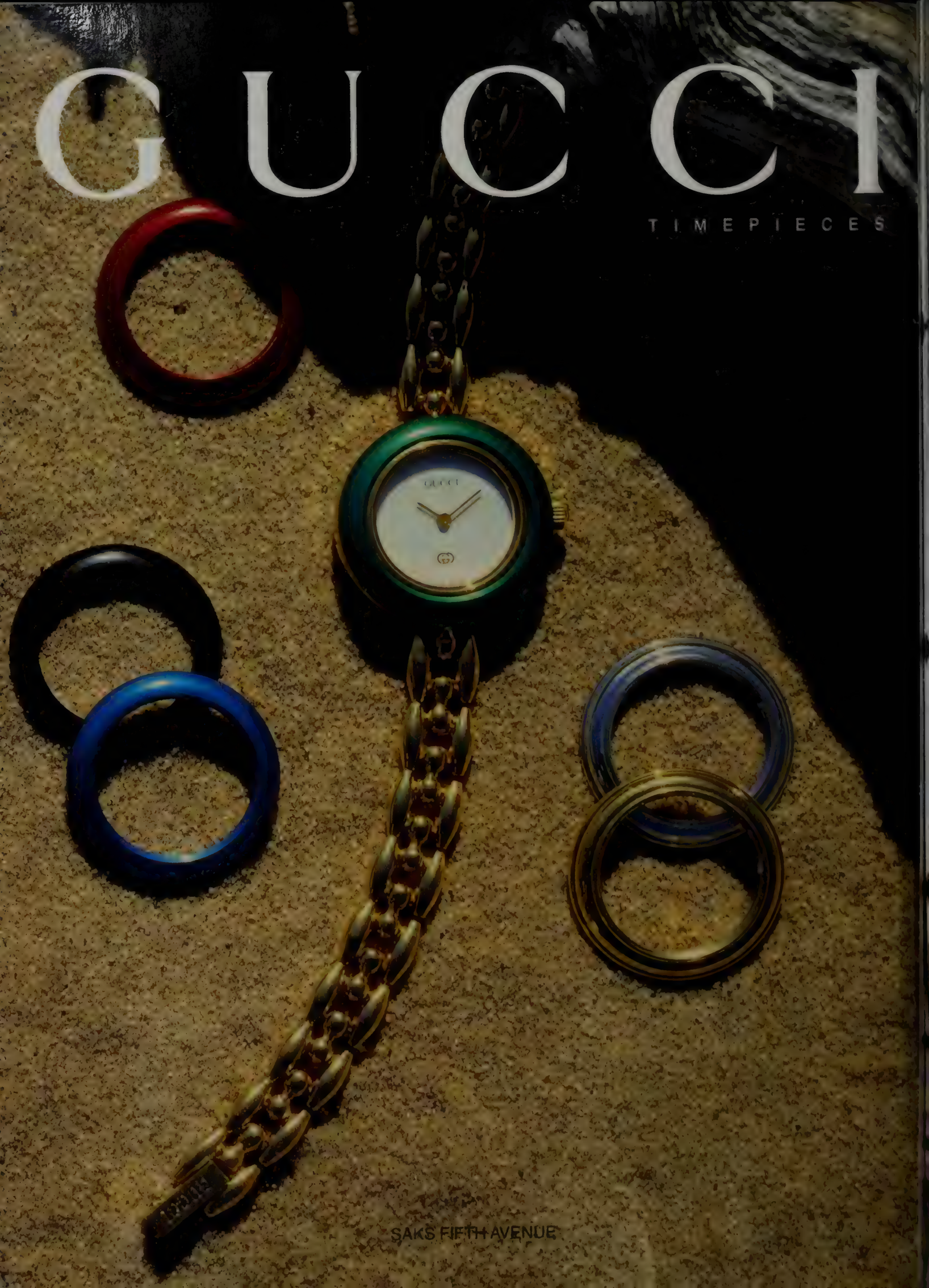
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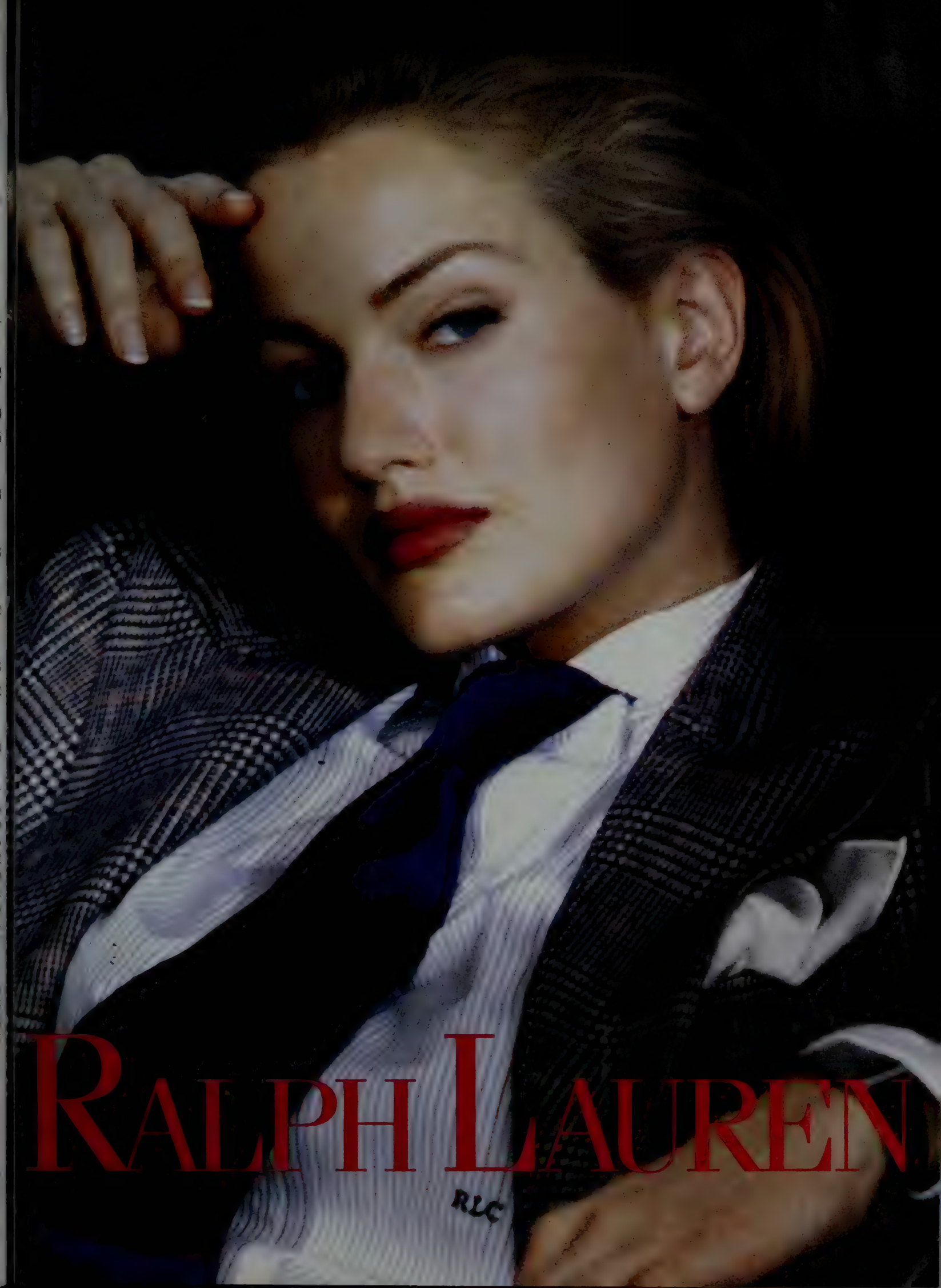
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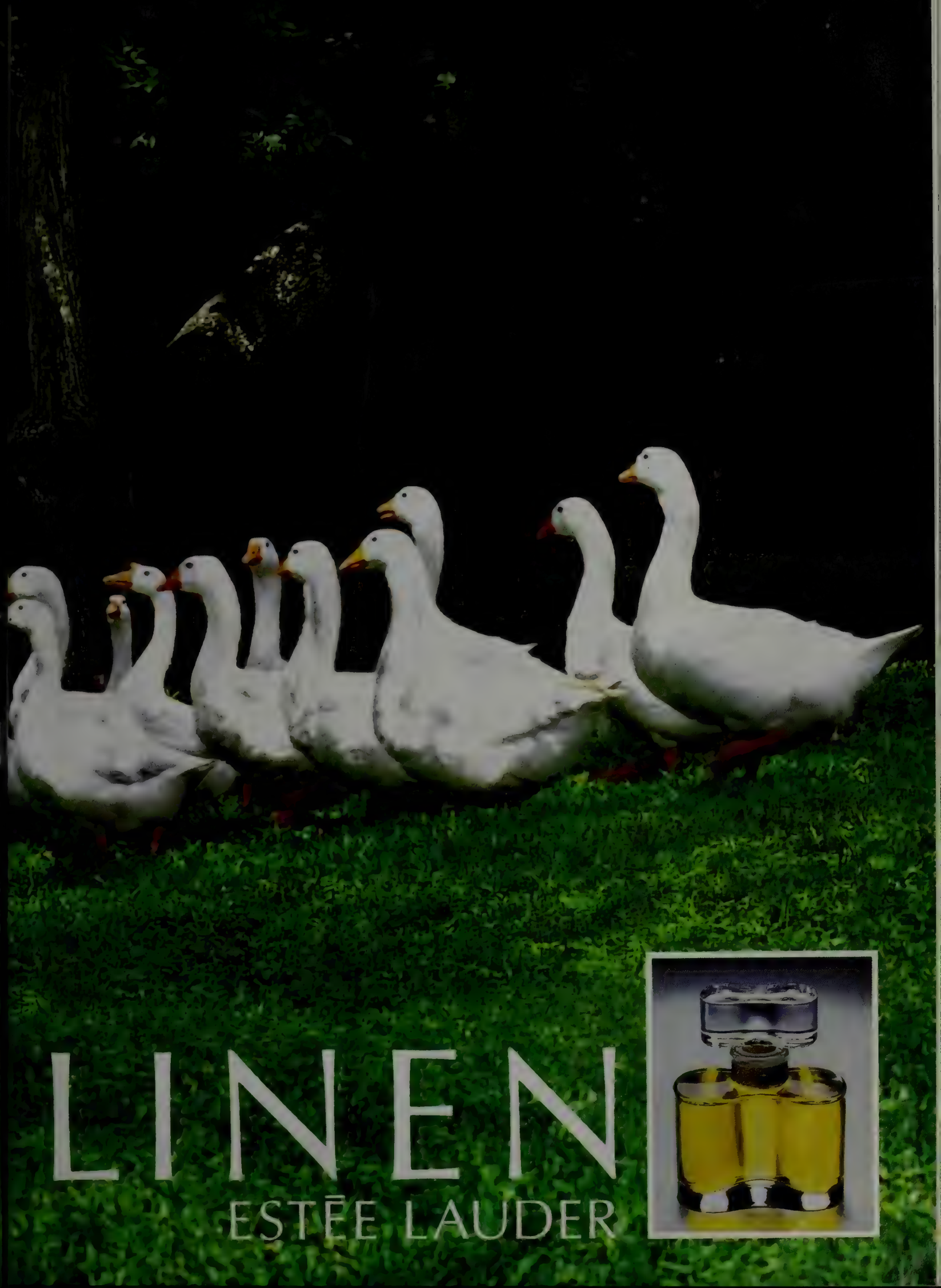
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Editor's Letter

Qué Hombre!



TIM SHEAFFER

In England, the most venerable of monarchies, the bulimic princess weeps in her palace, imprisoned by protocol in a loveless marriage. Or so we are reasonably led to believe. The melodrama of the Princess of Wales evokes widespread sympathy, but also republican skepticism about the role of royalty in a modern state. A few hundred miles south in Spain, however, there is little doubt that monarchy is a precious national asset. A Juan-come-lately king, with an accursed Bourbon lineage that cannot compare with the sterling Windsors', is hailed not only as the shining symbol of his country but, more important, as the defender of Spanish democracy. Without King Juan Carlos I, his subjects agree, Spain might now be another backward military dictatorship instead of a thrumming free society.

The long siesta is over for Spain. Madrid is a wild, around-the-clock traffic jam—as one Spaniard puts it, "When I want to sleep I go to New York." Several years ago the peseta replaced the deutsche mark as Europe's hardest currency, the entire country is swept up in a massive building boom, and Spaniards now vacation in Switzerland because things are so much cheaper there. This year is one long fiesta. The country is celebrating five hundred years since Columbus sailed off to discover America. Spain has won a place in the European Community, Barcelona beat out Paris for the Olympics, Seville beat out Chicago for the Expo, and Madrid has been named Europe's cultural capital for 1992.

The king, an Olympic sailor himself twenty years ago, has had a hand in nearly every event. But, as T. D. Allman relates on page 154, he earned his gold medal on February 23, 1981, a night every Spaniard remembers as clearly as Americans do the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. On that evening the Guardia Civil, attired in their black cocked hats and insurrectionary mustaches, burst into the Cortes, the Spanish parliament, and took all of Spain's top elected officials hostage. The country teetered between a return to Franco-flavored Fascism and a second Spanish Civil War. But the coup plotters made one miscalculation: they assumed the king would be with them. Instead, Juan Carlos used all his authority and charm, indeed staked his life, to defend the imperiled constitution. In a historical irony, the monarch became the lone, triumphant defender of democracy.

How did a prince born into shabby exile manage to win back the throne, survive the manipulations of Fascist dictator Francisco Franco, and lead his country to its current place in the limelight? To take the full measure of the king, T. D. Allman spoke with a broad cross section of Spaniards, from intellectuals to dukes, from pro-Franco society matrons to the country's Socialist prime minister. The overwhelming consensus? If kings were elected, every one would vote for Juan Carlos. Forty million Spaniards can't be wrong. *¡Qué hombre!*

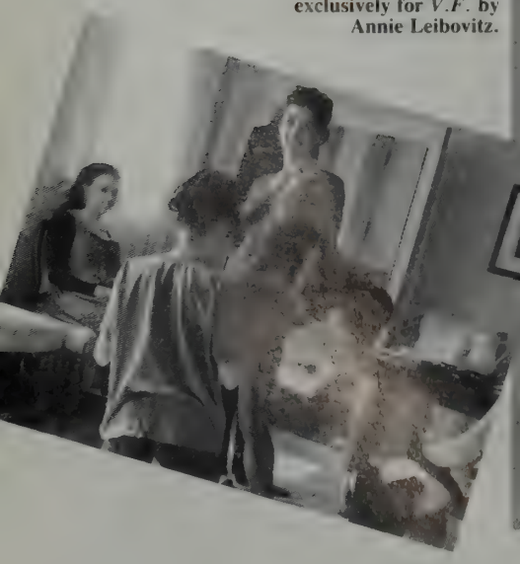
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Editor in chief

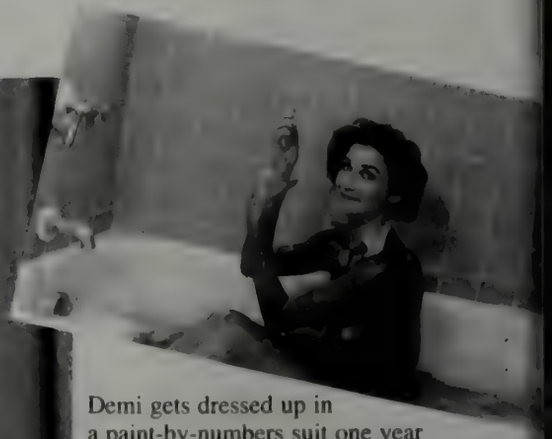
Cover

Suit Up

ON THE COVER
Demi Moore in body paint by Joanne Gair; hair by Peter Savic; both for Cloutier. Styled by Lori Goldstein. Photographed exclusively for *V.F.* by Annie Leibovitz.







Demi gets dressed up in a paint-by-numbers suit one year after the *V.F.* cover that launched a thousand headlines. "Demi was into it," says body-painting artist Joanne Gair, with Demi's personal assistant, Daneen Conroy, *far left*, at the fifteen-hour makeup session. "The time-consuming part was building up the density of the paint and getting the pattern of the cloth in the vest, because her body heat tended to melt it." Demi in the tub, *above*, cleaning up her act.

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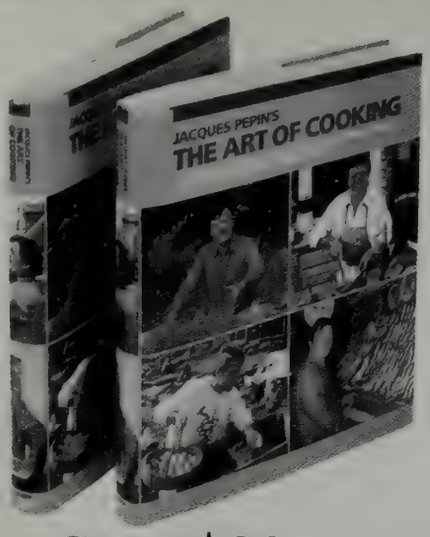
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Contributors

T. D. Allman, *V.F.*'s foreign correspondent, is the author of *Miami: City of the Future* and *Unmanifest Destiny,* both of which deal with the historical interchange of Hispanic and American cultures.

Christopher Buckley, the editor of *Forbes FYI,* is working on a book about the New Puritanism.

Leslie and Andrew Cockburn covered the Gulf War and its aftermath for ABC and PBS's *Frontline.* They returned to Baghdad for *V.F.* to see how Saddam's men are keeping their grip on Iraq.

Jennet Conant is a New York–based writer. "A lot of people think young actresses get ahead just by being pretty," she says of this month's cover subject. "But Demi is far from dumb. She's a strong, street-smart woman who is completely in control of her career."

Lynn Hirschberg covers Hollywood, the media, and music for *V.F.*

Luke Jennings, who has written for the London *Guardian* and *The Independent Magazine,* is completing his first novel.

Jesse Kornbluth's *Highly Confident: The Crime and Punishment of Michael Milken* (William Morrow) is just out. Of his piece this month, he says, "When Christopher Whittle, the man who brought TV commercials into public schools, is involved in an effort to start a chain of private schools, and when he gets Benno Schmidt Jr., the president of Yale University, to head his project, the subject becomes white-hot. The project touches on the big theme of the 1990s: the dismantling and privatizing of the public institutions that once made ours the most democratic and humane country in the world."

Arthur Lubow's biography of Richard Harding Davis, *The Reporter Who Would Be King,* is out this month from Scribner's.

David Remnick was Moscow correspondent for *The Washington Post* from January 1988 to last fall.

Sally Bedell Smith, the author of *In All His Glory: The Life of William S. Paley,* is writing a biography of Pamela Harriman for Simon & Schuster.

Marjorie Williams covered political topics and the women's movement for *The Washington Post* for five years. Of this month's subject, she says, "Barbara Bush has been handled with kid gloves by the media because she touches on so many confused feelings that we have about women and mothers and family—and what we expect from them."

James Wolcott has written for *Harper's, The New Republic,* and the London *Observer.*



TIM SHEAFFER

T. D. Allman on King Juan Carlos and the transformation of Spain, page 154.



Marjorie Williams on America's grandmother, First Lady Barbara Bush, page 120.



David Remnick on Mikhail Gorbachev's ousted party and shattered union, page 92.



Sally Bedell Smith on the power and the empire of Stavros Niarchos, page 128.



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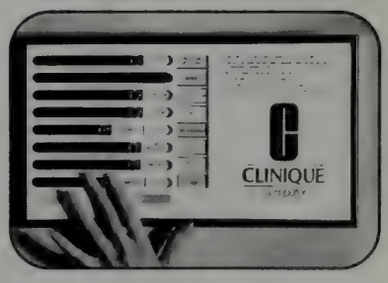
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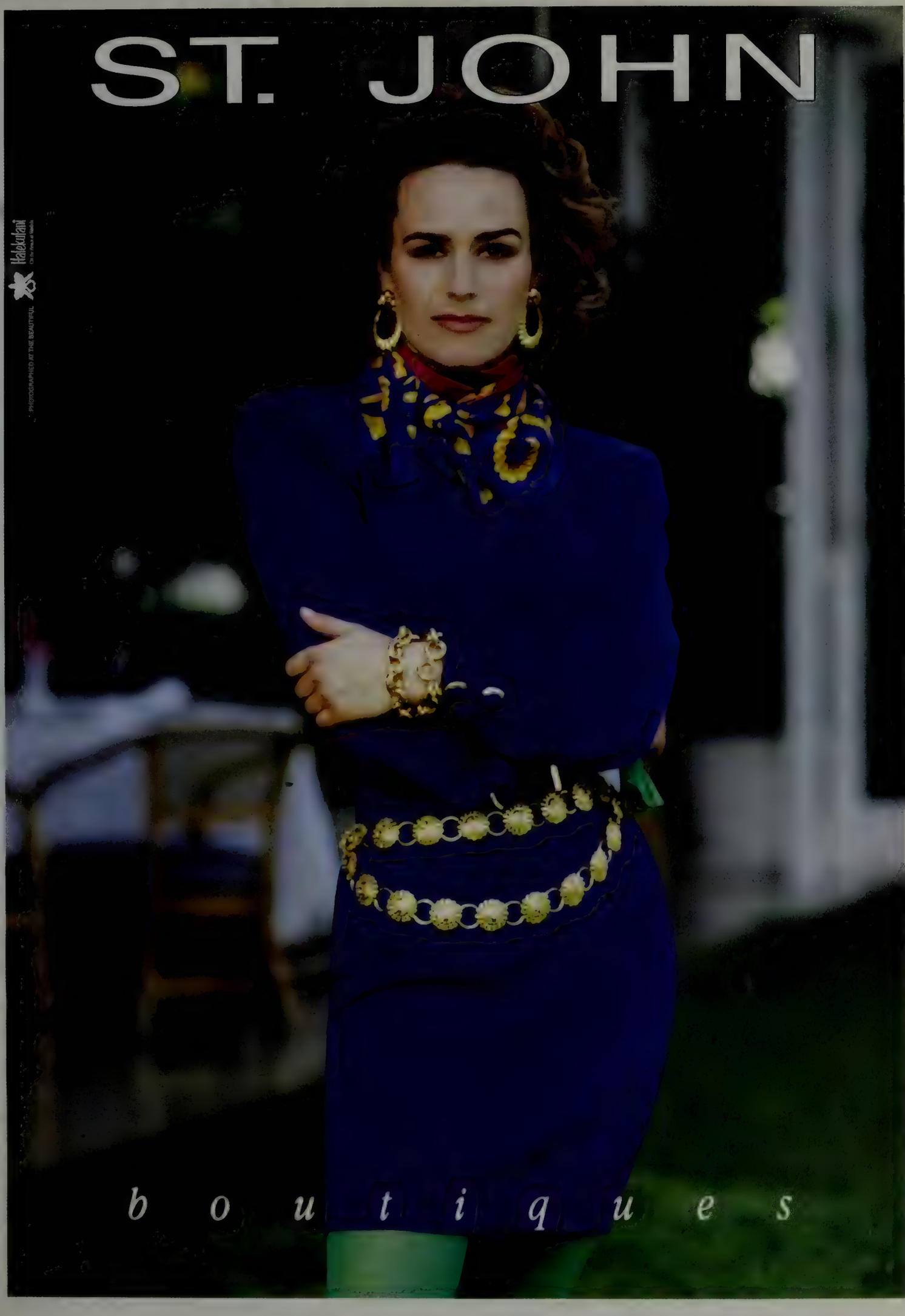
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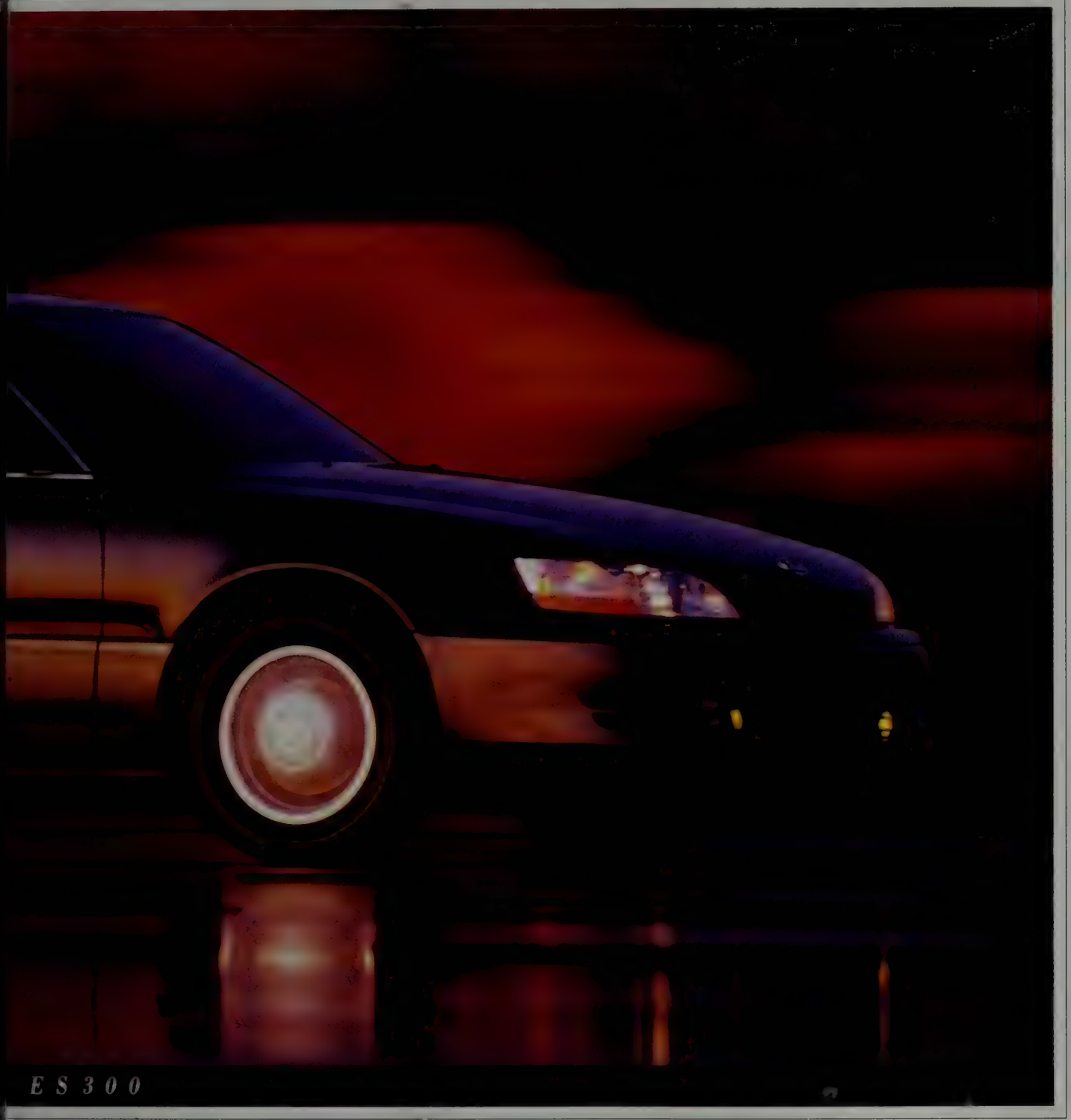

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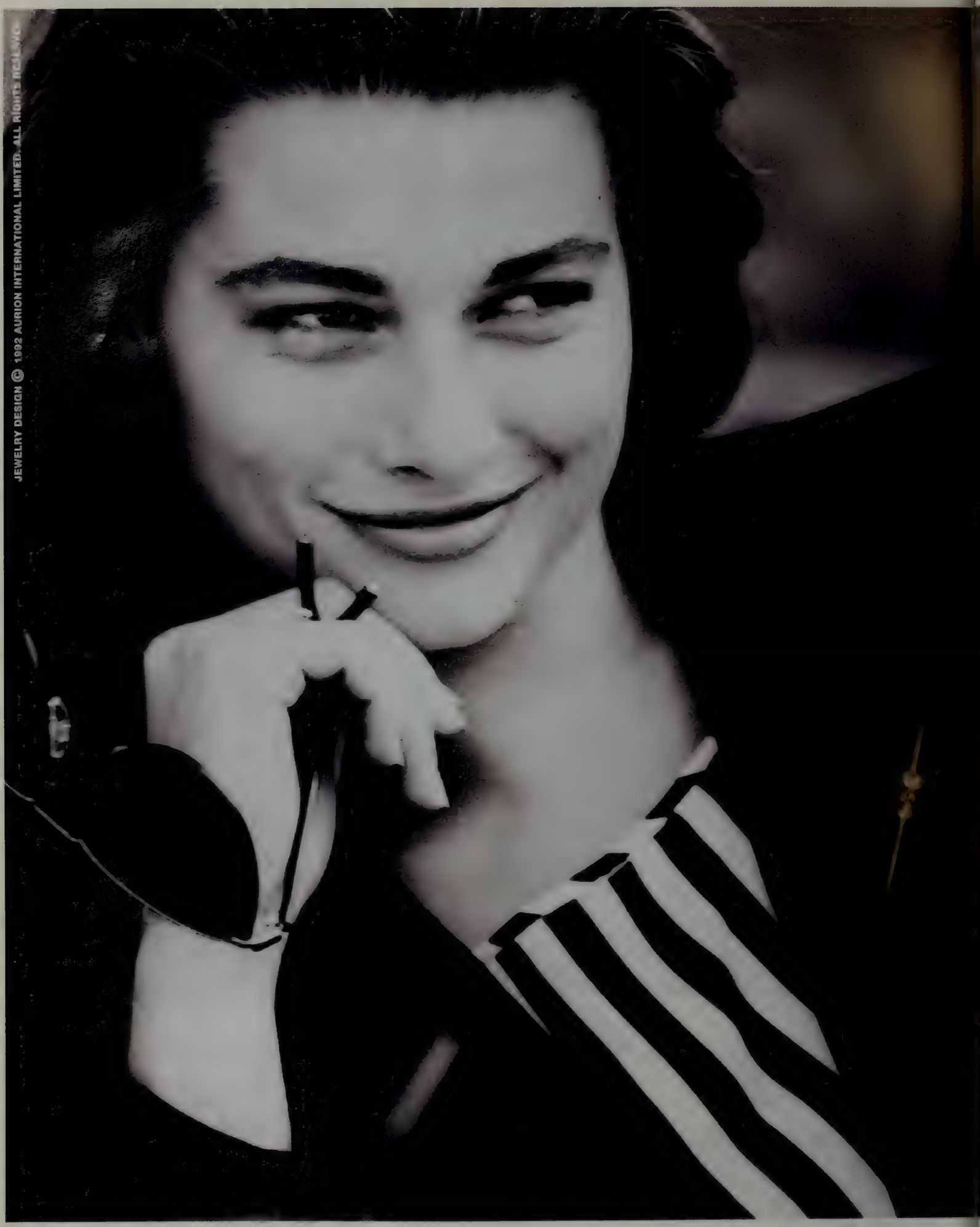
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Letters



READERS BITE BACK

Ivan Not-So-Terrible

As president of the Ukrainian-American Bar Association of Michigan, I was very happy to see fair treatment of the John Demjanjuk affair in a major American publication [''How Terrible Is Ivan?'' June]. Fredric Dannen gives credit to Edward Nishnic and John Demjanjuk Jr. for their dogged determination, which led to the discovery of the witness statements in the Fedorenko file—some of which the U.S. Justice Department had had in its file since 1978 and had never turned over to the defense. Were it not for their persistence, there is no question but that John Demjanjuk would have been hanged by now.

Regarding Otto Horn, even more troubling than that his testimony during the video deposition ''was false'' is the fact that the circumstances under which the false testimony was given could easily lead one to conclude that members of the Office of Special Investigations knew that Horn's testimony was false, and actively and knowingly encouraged it. The Horn matter and the withholding of evidence by the O.S.I. are more than mere irregularities of the Justice Department in the handling of the case. Whatever the decision of the Israeli Supreme Court, the U.S. government must demand the immediate return of John Demjanjuk.

JAROSLAW DOBROWOLSKYJ
Detroit, Michigan

Nix on Nixon

Michael R. Beschloss in ''How Nixon Came In from the Cold'' [June] suggests that the ex-president and the American public now agree that he has achieved the status of senior statesman. Not true! Most of us would have rather agreed to see him serve time.

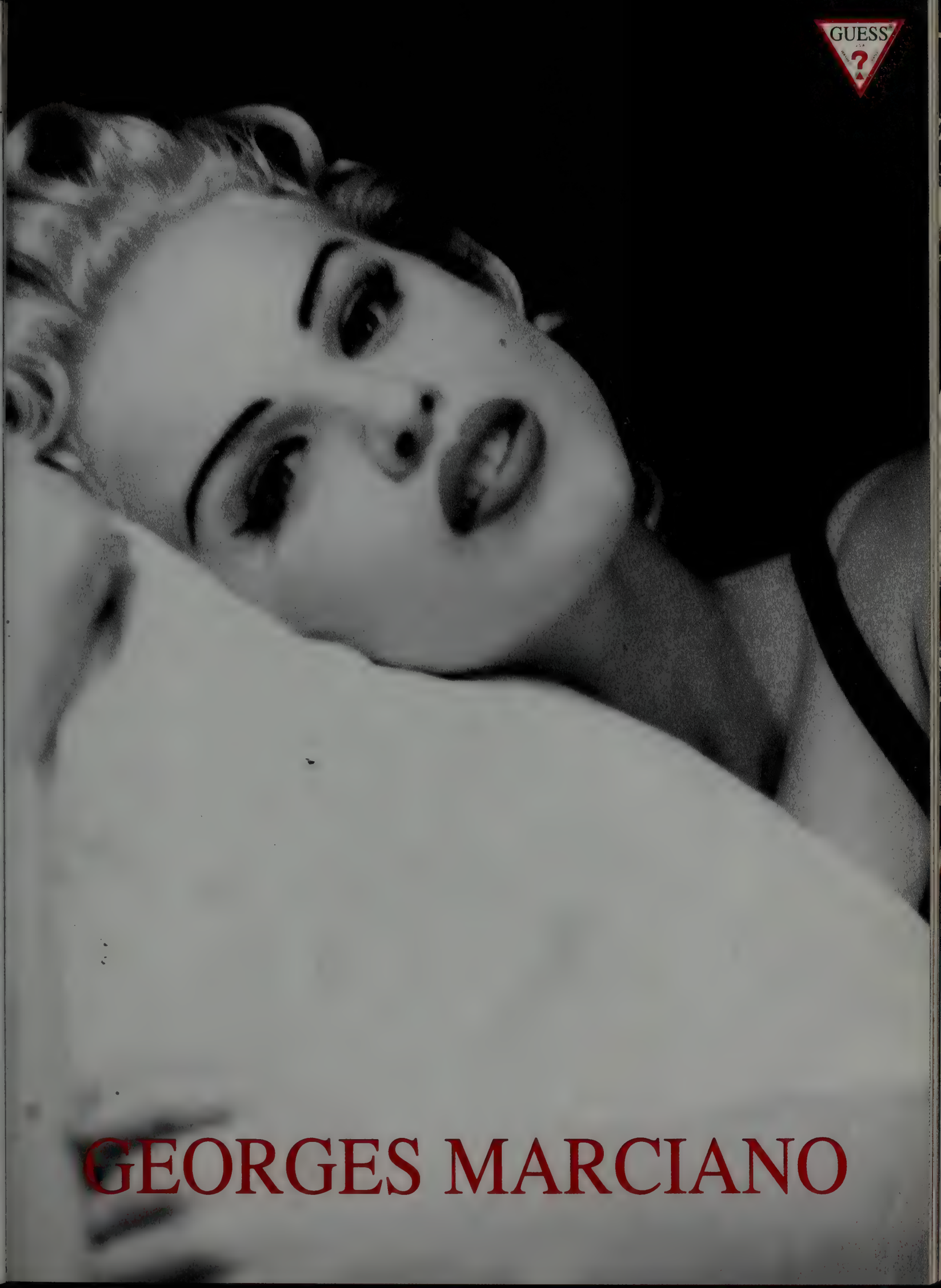
CHASE WEEKS-GOFF
San Francisco, California

George Bush may regard Richard Nixon as ''one of the greatest statesmen of the twentieth century,'' but history records him as the only president to have left the highest office in America in disgrace. His vice president also had to resign in disgrace. For the first time in history, the United States had a president *and* a vice president who had not been elected. Great statesman? George Bush must measure greatness with a dung fork.

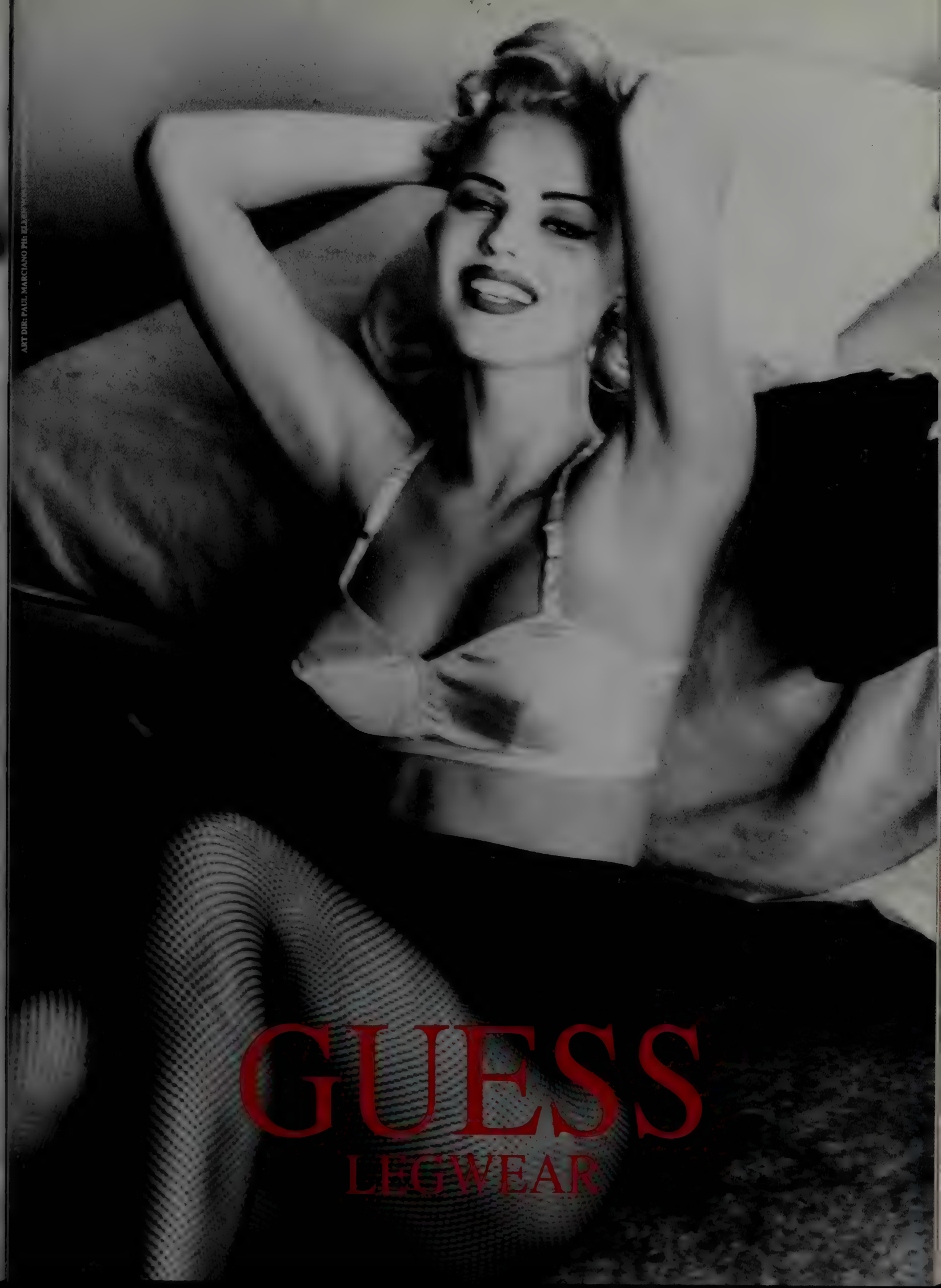
E. WARREN SMITH
Brooklyn, New York

I was in the fifth grade in Whittier, California, when our ''native son'' was elected to the presidency. We had a WELCOME TO WHITTIER, HOMETOWN OF PRESIDENT RICHARD M. NIXON sign on our corner—which was stolen the night he resigned. Two years later, I registered as a Democrat, the first in a very Republican family. Three years later, my brother did the same. We should never

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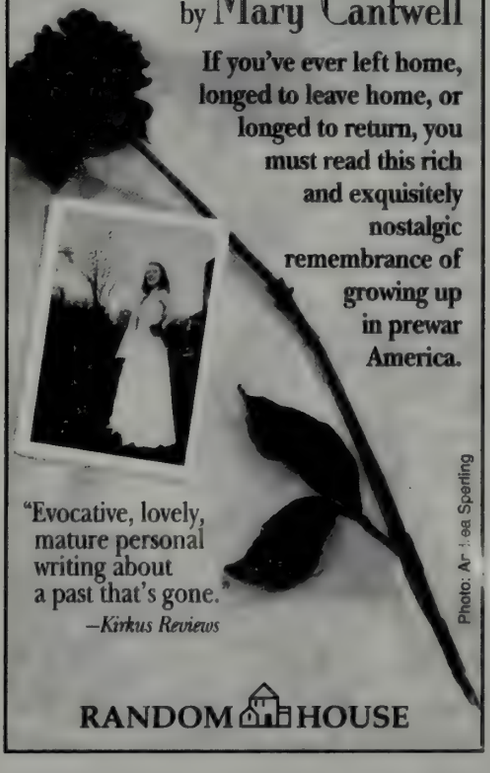
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RANDOM HOUSE

Letters

forget the paranoia, lies, deception, and hunger for power which led to Watergate.

MARGARET R. MACKENZIE
Menlo Park, California

Until I read Michael R. Beschloss's fine piece on the rehabilitation of Richard Nixon, I had been of the opinion that Nixon was a lying, thieving sneak and a thoroughgoing son of a bitch. My thanks to Beschloss for informing me that Nixon is now a rehabilitated lying, thieving sneak and a thoroughgoing son of a bitch.

WILLIAM J. SLATTERY
Jamestown, Rhode Island

Hot Watergate

Reading "Watergate," in the June issue, I realized that you can't help but feel sorry for Nixon, surrounded—i.e., isolated—by that bunch. Talk about bad advice!

OLIVIA L. HOLMES
Memphis, Tennessee

With regard to the material next to my photograph, two comments are in order. Although John Ehrlichman approved my part-time consultancy to the office of Charles Colson, I was never aware that he—or anyone—"fired" me. Following the arrest of the entry team, I assumed that my further presence in the Old Executive Office Building would embarrass the administration, and so I never returned. Of more significance is the allegation that I was promised executive clemency by Colson as an inducement to plead guilty. My reasons for pleading guilty are detailed in my autobiography and had nothing to do with any alleged clemency offer. Moreover, a guilty plea by me and all but one of the Watergate defendants ran counter to White House interests in preventing the unraveling of the affair. Indeed, my quoted words, "We have no defense. The evidence against us is overwhelming," reprise my view of the futility of standing trial. The alternative was to plead guilty, as I and five others did. Q.E.D.

E. HOWARD HUNT
Miami, Florida

Wild Bill Clinton

Sidney Blumenthal focuses almost entirely on the sex-scandal aspect of Bill Clinton's so-called character problem ["The Secret War for the White House," June]. The important, disqualifying issue about Clinton is the draft issue, and it is not about "character." The Democratic Party is about to nominate for president a man who used political influence to escape military service during a time of war. That is astounding.

KAREN SANAL
Shirley, New York

I don't care who Bill Clinton screwed. I don't care if he screws Madonna in Texas Stadium during Cowboy halftime, just as long as he isn't screwing me. I voted for Reagan and Bush, and I feel like a victim of serial date rape.

JOYCE JONES
Fort Worth, Texas

Bening There

Regarding "The Annette Effect," by Joan Juliet Buck [June]: Annette Bening spent the 1985–86 season at the Denver Center Theatre Company, the area's major repertory theater, not the Colorado Shakespeare Festival, which is in Boulder. I covered theater for *The Denver Post* in those days, and Annette's performance as Eliza Doolittle in *Pygmalion* was truly memorable. (As for her Wild West Virgin Mary in the theater's Christmas production: don't ask.) Offstage, she was a sweet, scrawny, mousy woman who seemed much younger than her twenty-seven years. That she transformed herself into the thinking man's sex kitten proves she's an even better actress than any of us imagined.

ALAN N. STERN
Denver, Colorado

According to the article, Annette Bening, working as a secretary for her father when he was instructing Dale Carnegie sales courses, had the not-always-positive experience of dealing with flirtatious sales*men* in the class. Well, "The Right Training for the Real World" has changed since Annette Bening worked as a sales-course secretary. As a female Dale Carnegie sales-course instructor since 1986, I've seen *both* men and women radically expand their self-confidence, selling skills, leadership, and communications abilities through Dale Carnegie Training. Women make up approximately 40 percent of enrollments in my classes.

PATRICE DICKEY
Atlanta, Georgia

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THE SUN ALSO SETS

In his new memoirs, screenwriter Peter Viertel reminisces on the days when such big game as Papa Hemingway and John Huston still stalked the earth

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

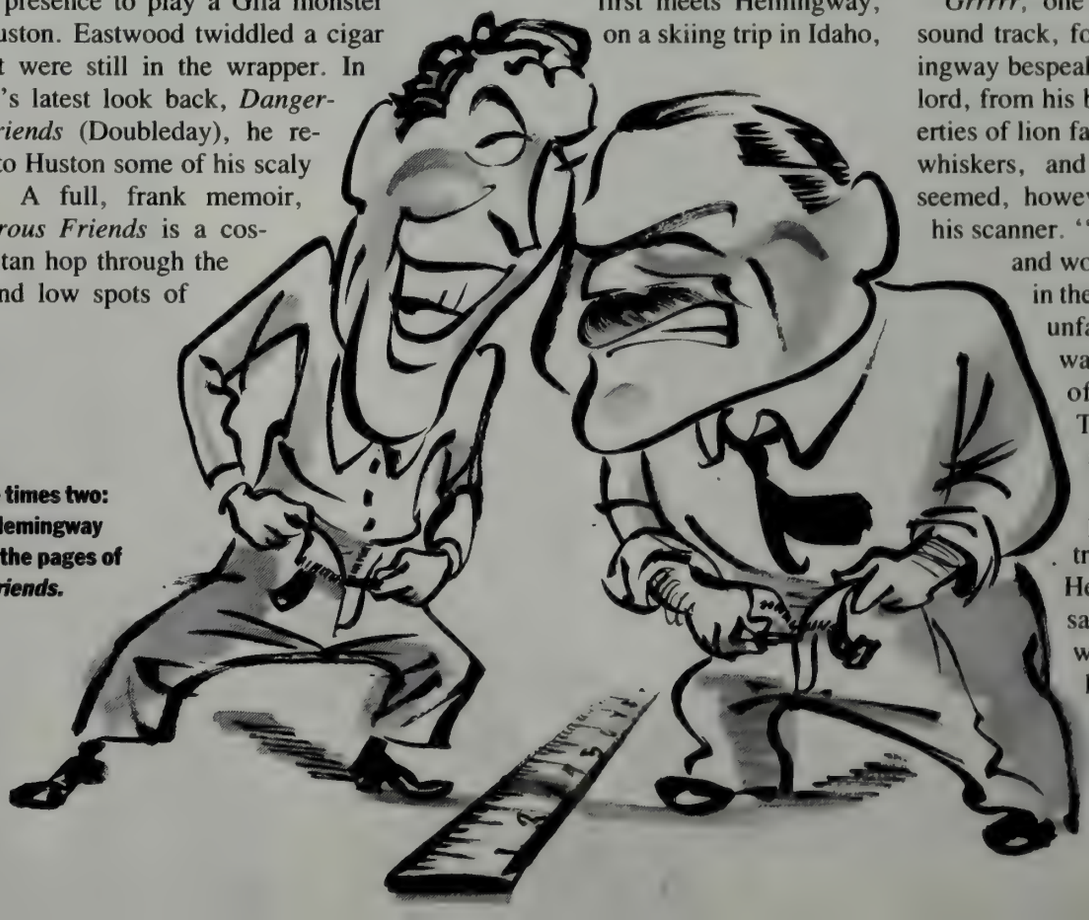
Peter Viertel's entire life has been framed in a viewfinder. He has frolicked in the company of filmmakers since he was knee-high to a story conference. His father, Berthold Viertel, was the model for the director in Christopher Isherwood's remarkable novel *Prater Violet*. His mother, Salka, was a screenwriter and an actress who conducted gossip sessions in Santa Monica attended by Charlie Chaplin, Sergei Eisenstein, Thomas Mann, Marlene Dietrich, and her great friend, Greta Garbo. A screenwriter himself, Viertel turned the wall-climbing ordeal of humoring John Huston on *The African Queen* into *White Hunter, Black Heart* (1953), the best novel ever written about the prerogatives of playing God on the set. On location in Africa, the cast and crew stew in their tents as the genius director sets off on a Hemingwayesque quest to shoot an elephant.

Those who only know *White Hunter, Black Heart* through Clint Eastwood's movie version are missing the meat of Viertel's on-site inspection of machismo gone mad. Although Eastwood the director gave it his all (the last twenty minutes of the film close like a fist), Eastwood the star was too stringy a screen presence to play a Gila monster like Huston. Eastwood twiddled a cigar as if it were still in the wrapper. In Viertel's latest look back, *Dangerous Friends* (Doubleday), he restores to Huston some of his scaly charm. A full, frank memoir, *Dangerous Friends* is a cosmopolitan hop through the high and low spots of Viertel's life and career, the scenery shifting from bullfights to location shootings to strolls in Vienna. It isn't all breakfast in bed. His heart takes serious hits. His father dies. His first wife dies of burns after her nylon nightgown catches fire. But his personal travails take a backseat to the role of playing a sensible chap in the thrall of charismatic men's men. I use the plural, for also prowling these pages is the model for Huston's baronial sense of manhood, Hemingway himself. It makes for a double-barreled load of ballsiness, this contest to be the bigger S.O.B.

The comedy of the book comes from how often Viertel is caught in a pickle trying to placate opposing egos. When he first meets Hemingway, on a skiing trip in Idaho, Papa (as he insists everyone call him—a quirk I discuss with Viertel below) poses as an absolute potentate, only to have his fourth wife, Mary, dive-bomb in and out of his stories like a bumblebee. "I noticed that she had a tendency to compete with her husband, correct his account of the day's shooting, and interrupt his stories about their life in Cuba." The sort of thing that might make anyone do a slow burn, although Hemingway doesn't seem to mind, until the name of a literary rival is tossed into the hopper. After Hemingway mentions Viertel's friend Irwin Shaw, "Mary interrupted to say that she 'adored Shaw' and that if I saw him again to be sure to give him a big kiss, a remark which did nothing to improve Papa's mood."

Grrrrr, one can almost hear on the sound track, for everything about Hemingway bespeaks the growl of the jungle lord, from his belief in the healing properties of lion fat to his own mangy odor, whiskers, and largess. Sleepy as he seemed, however, he never turned off his scanner. "As I had already learned, and would learn again and again in the years ahead, Papa had an unfailing instinct about what was going through the minds of people around him." This is a rare trait in famous authors, who tend to retract their feelers and pontificate once they attract a fan club. But then, Hemingway was a man who saw much of the literary world leagued against him, lying in wait for any weakening—pygmies creeping up on the lion.

Sniffing his enemies near, Hemingway didn't



TIM SHEAFFER

Testosterone times two: Huston and Hemingway square off in the pages of *Dangerous Friends*.

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squander his effects. When he swatted, it was with all claws. In Havana, Viertel introduces Hemingway to Huston, who is researching a film project. It all seems amiable enough:

The guests were all seated in the living room of our suite, drinks in hand, when the conversation turned to the Spanish Civil War and the documentary movie Hemingway had made with Joris Ivens. John complimented Papa on his narration and the underplayed tone of voice with which he had read his own words. "What made you decide to narrate the film yourself, Papa?" Huston asked, with apparently keen interest.

"Orson Welles was supposed to do it," Hemingway said, his mouth twitching a little, a sign, I had learned, of extreme annoyance.

"Orson, eh?" Huston said, nodding. "And why didn't he do it?" Everyone in the room was listening by this time.

"Well, John," Hemingway replied in his gravelly voice, speaking very clearly and slowly. "Every time Orson said the word 'infantry' it was like a cocksucker swallowing."

That outburst might be dismissed as momentary pique. Odder was the performance Papa put on for the socialite Slim Keith, who had been married to the director Howard Hawks. (And would later be victimized by Truman Capote in *Answered Prayers*.) Hemingway greets Keith and Viertel shirtless, his khaki trousers riding low on his hips. Pausing in front of a still life, he intones, "Miss Slim, if you look long enough at this painting it will mean absolutely nothing to you at all." Then, with a wiggle of his hips, his trousers slide to the floor.

Naked as the day he was born, he stepped out of them.

Slim stared at him in wild-eyed horror. "Papa, for heaven's sake, what are you doing?" she said, keeping her eyes high enough to avoid looking at her naked suitor.

Hemingway chuckled. "All right for the camera, Pete?" he asked.

"Perfect, Papa," I replied. "Cut and print."

"Please, Papa," Slim pleaded, "put your pants back on!"

Later, when Keith and Viertel are alone, she begs him to get out of this bughouse, where Mary Hemingway is also showing signs of wear. Seeing the effect Slim Keith has on her husband, she dyes her hair a horrible shade of red.

Compared with the Hemingways' sudden impulses, Huston's shenanigans are more colonial. Where Hemingway reveals cracks in his psyche, Huston adds crust to his legend. In Ireland he revels in the role of country squire, stripping the moss off a run-down manor to make room for a Japanese bath, his collection of pre-Columbian art, and closets full of the latest in fox-hunt wear. When Jean-Paul Sartre arrives to work on the script for *Freud,* Huston meets him on horseback, booted and spurred. "It was a strange way to welcome the originator of existentialism, a man who frowned upon all personal possessions," notes Viertel. But Huston assumed that everyone shared his kicks, even an abyss-monger like Sartre.

When Sartre arrives, Huston meets him on horseback, booted and spurred. "It was a strange way to welcome the originator of existentialism," notes Viertel.

Our country squire does suffer a knock now and then. There's a funny-horrible account of Christmas at the old manse, with the children, Tony and Anjelica, playing around the tree as Huston sports a glorious shiner, a present from his wife during a knock-down-drag-out the night before. Excited, Elizabeth Taylor's second husband, Michael Wilding, grasps Viertel by the elbow and asks if there's any chance of signing up Mrs. Huston for the welterweight division. " 'With a right hand like that she could make us both rich,' he said."

Along with Huston licking his wounds (and chops), *Dangerous Friends* features Ava Gardner coming slowly unstrung, Brendan Behan spouting spume, Orson Welles wedged in a chair, David Niven tragically impaired, and a young Robert Evans proving too big for his toreador pants in *The Sun Also Rises*. Introspection is kept to a murmur. There is some loss of up-front immediacy. Although Viertel describes his involvement with various women, there's a notable lack of libido. Things just sort of happen, as when Slim Keith drops by to borrow a match and next thing you know it's morning. Perhaps this is out of deference to his wife, Deborah Kerr, with whom he lives in Spain and Switzerland. As an actress, after all, Kerr personified class. And chilly class at that, observes *From Here to Eternity* director Fred Zinnemann in his recent autobiography: "When posing in a swimsuit for wardrobe stills, she was heard to say, 'I feel naked without my tiara.' "

It was Kerr who answered the phone when I rang Spain to speak to Viertel. Being shy and well behaved, I didn't ask if she was wearing her tiara. I did ask her husband something I'd always wanted to ask a friend of Hemingway's—if he found it strange calling him "Papa." It's just so Freud. Viertel: "Like everything else, you got used to it after a while, although Fred Zinnemann used to choke trying to say the name. It *is* a peculiar business, wanting to be called 'Papa' so early in life, to be that paternal that young. But then, Hemingway was prematurely old, physically banged-up, and so on. He romanticized himself, and romanticized others. As I wrote the book, although I still have great affection for him, I became more aware of his duplicity. But then, he was a sick man at the end."

Hemingway's suicide isn't the only shadow in *Dangerous Friends*. One by one, the candles have been snuffed. Huston's gone, Hemingway's gone, Garbo's gone, Dietrich's gone, Ava Gardner, Irwin Shaw, Orson Welles, all *pfft*. But at the age of seventy-one, Viertel's still in there pitching, working on two novels and a play. I asked him what he thought of Eastwood's treatment of *White Hunter, Black Heart*. "I thought a lot of it was well played, but I think only the young George C. Scott could have gotten Huston's power across." Apropos, Scott played the Hemingway surrogate in *Islands in the Stream,* bearing the domed sky on his bull neck. Yet even he couldn't transmit Hemingway's paranoid glints. That no actor in his prime could carry either one of these monsters' ammo packs suggests something shrunken on the scene. True, we're better off without bwana types piling up animal corpses and machine-gunning marlins. Machismo isn't ecologically sound. But art requires a few big-time S.O.B.'s seizing life by the horns, influxes of raw nerve to keep everyone else loose and alive. The politesse of Peter Viertel provides a poignant counterpoint to the echoing cries of the extinct species Huston and Hemingway become in *Dangerous Friends*. □


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the language



"Lion" and "cub": Saddam Hussein with eldest son Uday during Gulf War anniversary celebrations. "There is a lot of trade to be done," says Uday. "So I am doing some trade."

SADDAM'S BEST ALLY

An eyewitness report on how the U.S.-backed sanctions are creating a powerful profiteering elite—and buoying Saddam's war-torn dictatorship

BY LESLIE AND ANDREW COCKBURN

It is Monday night, and Uday Saddam Hussein is at his table in the National Restaurant, the expensive little bistro done in Casbah gold leaf and black lacquer, in Baghdad's Rasheed Hotel. Mr. Abdullah strums his santir in the corner, while Uday, along with eight close friends, sings a rousing number from, as he puts it, "the days of a *Thousand and One Nights*." Uday is nursing his own decanter of cognac and beating rhythm with a Havana cigar.

This is the twenty-eight-year-old son of Saddam Hussein, who bludgeoned his father's valet to death for acting as a go-between with Saddam's mistress (the ex-wife of the chairman of Iraqi Airways). Uday executed the "presidential pimp" in front of his dishonored mother, doubtless to emphasize his filial devotion. An angry Saddam threatened to kill his elder "cub," as each of Saddam's sons is called, and was dissuaded only by King Hussein of Jordan, who flew in to mediate in the family crisis.

First Family relations are smooth now, and the man in the elegant designer jacket, with the trim beard and a golden gun in his pocket, is feared by everyone in Baghdad. When Uday and his party wade into the National behind a phalanx of bodyguards, the entire restaurant empties in minutes. Two of the bodyguards head straight for the kitchen to taste "Their Excellencies' " food. The second "Excellency" at the table is Qusay Saddam Hussein. "The Lion's other cub," as a crony at the table respectfully calls him, is dressed out of a J. Crew catalogue and has a watered-down version of the features of the face in a thousand and one portraits around town. Qusay leaves the same impression as the boy at the dance with the sweaty palms, who would rather be dissecting rats. Flushed with shyness, he discourses quietly on Mesopotamian culture, glancing furtively for approval at the owner of the cigar across the table—at twenty-five very much the baby brother. "Not such a baby now," Uday laughs. "He runs all the security services."

Security, the Mukhabarat, excites the same frisson as the Duvaliers' Tontons Macoute. The Mukhabarat is, in the minds of Baghdadis, omniscient. Every waiter, every man in the corner with a short leather jacket and a vacant look, could be Mukhabarat. In the past nine months of the Hujoum al Mudhad, or "the Counterattack," as the rebuilding of Baghdad is known, the Mukhabarat has tightened on the city like a vise. Even among those who are reaping the immense profits of reconstruction, with a contract to rebuild a bridge or a government office block or a tasteful three-story mansion for a deputy minister, the small at-home dinner party has become very popular. "We can't talk in restaurants," remarks one beneficiary of the Counterattack. "People get arrested for making a joke."

Their Excellencies the cubs are, naturally, above all of this. Uday and Qusay, who as children confided to playmates that they were allowed to witness torture sessions in preparation for the difficult tasks ahead, have immunity.

Uday flaunts his immunity every morning when his newspaper, *Babel*, hits the stands. "Iraq's only independent daily," as its editor proudly describes it, *Babel* has a circulation of 70,000. It is the talk of Baghdad because its columns are rife with uninhibited attacks on the government (the father of the proprietor excluded). Delicious gossip about government ministers, denunciations of black-market racketeers, exposés of shoddy reconstruction—all are there in *Babel*. The paper broke the story that Al Jumhuriya Bridge, a cherished city landmark trisected by allied precision guided bombs and hastily rebuilt with countless dinars, is buckling. The article earned *Babel* a two-week suspension. Since then, the paper has freewheeled. As one cynical Baghdadi remarked, "Our government provides us with everything, even an opposition." But the people seem grateful: a hundred or so citizens turn up every day at the editorial offices to vent their complaints. They thrill at the little digs at Baath Party executives. *Babel* recently ran a poll to determine who was the most handsome minister. The health minister won by a landslide.

Babel's editor in chief, Abbas Jenaby, is Uday's best friend, confidant, and


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secretary. Jenaby has the privilege of sitting next to His Excellency at the National. He chain-smokes and sips Johnny Walker Black Label, the Iraqi national drink, as Uday pours another cognac.

The conversation turns, as it often does these days in Baghdad, to the widely advertised covert operations being mounted by the Bush White House to "get" Saddam. The cubs lead the hearty laughter at the notion, proclaimed by Pentagon briefer Pete Williams, that there are "cracks in the inner circle," cracks to be exploited this election season by a well-financed replay of the Kurdish and Shiite revolts that failed so miserably after Desert Storm. "Look," says Uday, his enormous brown eyes narrowing, "this business about splitting us is nonsense." He points his cigar down the table, which is littered with bottles of scotch. "I have two Shiites here. I have a Kurd who works for me." Jenaby, the editor, nods in tandem. He is a Shiite from one of Iraq's most powerful tribes. "I have a big family," he says proudly. "There are two million of us." This Shiite, a most loyal follower of the Sunni ruling clique, further illustrates the ethnic complications of Iraq by disclosing that before joining Uday's inner circle he worked for a paper belonging to the Barzanis, the First Family of the Kurds.



A family affair: "The Lion's other cub," Qusay—here on a pleasure cruise with his father in the 1970s—today runs the Mukhabarat, Iraq's dread security service.

"This business about splitting us is nonsense. I have two Shiites here. I have a Kurd who works for me."

To buttress Uday's claims of national unity, Jenaby whips out a tiny passport photo. "This man," he says gravely, "is a Kurd. He was burned to death by the Kurds. The Kurds are begging for Saddam. They are being killed by the Peshmerga [the Kurdish guerrilla forces]." Pausing for a draft of whiskey, he winds up for the finish. "They are praying to God that Saddam will come." The cubs beam. There are no splits at this table. Uday takes a tough line with dissent. Once, when he made a pass at a dark beauty in a nightclub, her army-officer husband expressed his irritation. Uday, Baghdadis whisper, shot him on the spot.

Johnny, the Sudanese waiter, is dashing nervously around the table, lighting cigarettes and sweeping up offending crumbs, careful not to meet anyone's eye. As some fragrant snuff is offered around the table, a junior officer from one of the security services swaggers into the restaurant, registers the identity of the customers, and bolts from the room.

Uday begins expounding on the intellectual career he never had. Had things worked out differently in his youth, he says, he might have channeled his violent impulses into more productive work. The top cub had hopes of becoming a nuclear physicist. In 1979 and 1980, before Israeli bombers knocked out Iraq's French-built Osirak reactor, Uday says, he traveled to the States in search of further education. "I did my S.A.T.'s, everything. I did very well. Passed with high marks." But after a short time, he adds, he was forced to give up his pursuit. "You see, I wanted to do nuclear studies, and at the time there was a problem with Iraqis' doing that." It was a bitter blow. "I wanted to go to M.I.T."

Now, of course, with United Nations inspection teams rifling through the top-secret documents in the wreckage of Iraq's nuclear installations, Uday's dream is thoroughly shattered. Still, there are consolations. With no prospect of building bombs, Uday has more time for tending the young plants in his extensive greenhouses off his private tennis court and driving his black Porsche.

No one at this table is suffering the effects of the two years of economic sanctions. Two Armenians, one with an enormous gut who is boisterously drunk, the other very thin and even more drunk; are beneficiaries of the economic boom that has been enriching those with connections to Their Excellencies. The thin one is the family jeweler, cleaning up on the postwar travails of middle-class Iraqis, who are pawning their gold for dinars to buy the astronomically expensive food.

His well-fed colleague one place down is Saddam's tailor and court philosopher. The tailor passes a beefy hand over his pomaded silver hair and asks us intently, "Did you know Howard Hughes? Well, you know who he is. You know the Armenian who worked with him? Owns all the casinos?" When the answer is negative, he proceeds: "How come I know more about America than you do? Because I'm from Sacramento. I'm from the Mafia. If you ever need any help, the Mafia can help you. I'll fix it." He recalls happy days in Las Vegas. "What is the name of this guy, you know, with the rings and the big heart? Liberace. Oh, he was such a good man." The Armenian turns to Saddam's eldest. "Do you know Liberace, Las Vegas?"

"No," says Uday with a lazy stare, "only Engelbert Humperdinck."

It is abundantly clear that money is flooding into the pockets of the ruling family's courtiers and associates, promoting the kind of loyalty that keeps the regime in power. As one wild-boar-hunting companion of Uday's puts it after ordering a bottle of champagne, "Business is very, very good. It's a great time for buying and selling." The boar hunter has been active lately in "import-export." Among other things, he is shipping out aluminum scrap and trucking in rice through the northern city of Mosul, the main entrepôt for the flourishing commerce, sanctions notwithstanding, with Turkey. When asked whether his warm friendship with Uday, who at the moment is out of earshot, helps in business, the hunter pauses. "No," he says with as much earnestness as an "importer-exporter" can manage. "The cub likes to have friends who don't need him for anything. *(Continued on page 57)*

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(Continued from page 48) Also, friends who tell the truth''—he breaks into a quick, nervous grin—''up to a point.''

From behind a cloud of cigar smoke at the head of the table, Uday takes up the theme that there is an upside to an economy devastated by war and sanctions. ''With all this situation, there is a lot of trade to be done,'' he says, and adds modestly, ''So I am doing some trade.'' (Thus far, he has secured the chicken monopoly in Iraq. Since chicken at the official dinar rate is now roughly the price of caviar in New York, the chicken king is doing well by feeding his people.) He pauses as Mr. Abdullah, whose eyes are carefully lowered, picks out another melody. ''This is a Kurdish song,'' observes Uday. ''Very beautiful.'' Another sip of Rémy Martin XO Special and he bursts into song.

The trade that is so lucrative these days is summed up by a scion of the *ancien régime* whose family tended to the affairs of the old Iraqi royal family, so deftly installed in 1921 by British colonial overseers. ''There are the rich who smuggle, the rich who take bribes, and the rich who steal,'' he says over an afternoon arrack, in what is, he hopes, the privacy of his garden. The ''new billionaires'' have seized the business opportunities afforded by sanctions and Iraq's porous borders with Jordan, Syria, Turkey, and Iran. With food prices, in some cases, twenty to sixty times what they were before the invasion of Kuwait, and with the need for spare parts of all kinds so acute, the profits are almost limitless. Anyone with access to an import route, including contact with the insurgent Kurds in the North, is smuggling.

Tariq Aziz, the diminutive foreign minister who faced James Baker across the table in Geneva in the final days before the bombing of Baghdad, is sanguine about the explosion of profiteering. Now deputy prime minister, though still in charge of what is left of Iraq's relations with the outside world, he ranks No. 6 in the ruling Baath Party hierarchy, which keeps him near the center of power and very comfortably settled in a vast suite of offices suitable for top officials with a firm sense of self-worth. The cavernous conference room, the plush carpets, the sprawling acres of walled grounds—all speak eloquently of a solid conviction that this regime will stand. The only sign that something may have rattled the status quo in the last year and a half or so is the profusion of small pyramids—the tops of bunkers—throughout the grounds, and the skeletons of bombed-out buildings beyond the gates.

''It's not the government that sells scotch whiskey and fine clothes,'' explains Aziz as he relights a pipeful of expensive tobacco. ''It's the merchants. They are smuggling it. If they smuggle it through Turkey, we cannot stop them. And sometimes they are bringing in sugar and wheat. At least the rich people can buy things. The upper class, they can buy whatever they wish. The lower class, they are not starving.'' The government food-distribution system, which still manages to supply people with an exiguous 1,300 calories a day, takes care of that. If the government shut down the active trading, Aziz reasons, ''then there would be a mess, like the Soviet Union.'' In short, the new billionaires are a phenomenon that any American should particularly appreciate. ''This,'' Aziz says, obviously amused, ''is a result of the free market.''

One of the new rich, moved to ecstasy by the nightclub performance of a talented belly dancer, hurled a blank check at her feet.

An out-of-the-way office across the border in Amman, Jordan, provides a vivid demonstration of the sanctions-era free market. The most interesting object in the room is a solid brick of $100 bills, amounting to $104,000, being passed casually from hand to hand. Periodically, the brick is waved in the air to emphasize a point. A young Baghdadi trader has come to do business with the merchants of Jordan, an affluent and well-tailored bunch who regard him as a somewhat crass arriviste. The Baghdadi, like everyone else in the room, wears a Rolex and is in the market for luxury goods. His brick of dollars is tossed unceremoniously into the safe. A telex machine in the corner spits out the morning's black-market exchange rate, 14.7 dinars to the dollar, down nearly 3 dinars in a week.

After the young man departs, eyebrows are raised at his remark that his ''conscience'' impels him to buy sugar—a much-needed commodity for next month's government food rations—along with his luxuries. ''Bullshit,'' says one of the locals present. ''It's not his conscience that's making him buy sugar. It's his fingernails.'' An ''Iraqi manicure'' is customarily administered in the dungeons of mild-mannered Qusay's security forces and results in the total loss of fingernails and often toenails as well. The Iraqi trader, it seems, finds it prudent to arrive home with sugar for the government warehouses, thereby keeping his profits, conscience, and body parts intact.

The tithe extracted from the smugglers to keep the population in rice and sugar (with the odd chicken or kilo of meat) is of paramount importance to the stability of the regime. How long the massive welfare system can continue without oil revenue to pay for it is a question which Aziz chooses to answer with uncharacteristic brevity: ''State secret.'' But there are clues.

Saddam's treasury keeps on doling out dinars. ''They are printing money around the clock,'' observes one Iraqi flourishing in the boom. ''The soldiers guard the mint day and night.'' But there's more than just the happy printers. As participants in the Amman business meeting attest, Iraqi officials are turning up around the Middle East with gold ingots to sell; bribes paid by Western companies for Iraqi construction contracts in the pre-war days have left a lot of dollars sitting in Swiss accounts; the government has been quietly selling off majority stakes in state-owned enterprises (payment in dollars only); and loot from Kuwait is still on hand, for which there is a good market in Iran. Ironically, much of this trade depends on cooperation with the rebellious Kurds, since the traffic flows through the frontier controlled by the Peshmerga. Although there are more direct routes farther south, the bribes exacted there by the local Iraqi-army commanders are considered outrageously high: ''Fifty percent! Who can make a profit on that?'' The Iranians pay for the goods in dollars, and the dollars go west, to Jordan, Syria, and Turkey, to buy what is needed.

Everyone in the smuggling business agrees on one fact: everything and everyone in Iraq is for sale nowadays, starting at ''the top,'' meaning, all again agree, Uday himself. While the average



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Iraqi finds that his monthly wage will buy just one sack of flour, if he can find it in the market, a lot of people, from the elder cub on down, are getting rich or richer.

This fortunate group can lavish dinars on what Ali Hassan al-Majid, the prudish defense minister (famed for gassing Kurdish villagers), recently called "denigrating nocturnal activities." He was alluding to a celebrated case in which one of the new rich, moved to ecstasy by the nightclub performance of a talented belly dancer, hurled a blank check at her feet. The regime is alert to the negative public-relations impact of such postwar excesses, which is why Saddam threw the unlucky patron of dance in jail and fined him the equivalent of $25,000, a move popular with the average wage earner, who is unable to afford a pound of ground beef. As part of the new puritanism, singing in restaurants has also been banned. (Not that there is anyone willing to enforce the ban when Saddam's firstborn launches into his Kurdish medley at the National.)

For an undiluted dose of denigrating nocturnal activities, the Embasy (*sic*) nightclub, just down the street from the forlorn-looking American Embassy (currently "the American Interest Section," staffed by four stand-in Polish diplomats), is a fair start. On a weekday evening, patrons slouched over Black Label (minimum order: a quarter-bottle) watch as five ample blondes poured into satin sheaths dance with one enormously fat man. He appears to be having a good time, grinning expansively at his multiple partners, his tiny feet steering the train of well-fed hookers.

Not far away, on Baghdad's main nightclub strip, a more wholesome atmosphere prevails at Anduls, described by the barker at the door as a "family nightclub." The floor show, lit by flashing red and blue lights, is a blur of red crêpe and glittering sequins. The clientele is respectable, the service attentive. As the band strikes up a deafening Yemeni pop tune, a willowy young mother in three-inch peau de soie heels escorts her daughter to the stage. Together, the pair moves gracefully around the dance floor, the little girl tapping her Mary Janes and swinging a string of rhinestone worry beads. The bill for a modest order of one beer and one Pepsi comes to 120 dinars, three weeks' wages for a junior bureaucrat. "Business," says the manager, "is excellent."

Another way to earn the price of an evening at Anduls, besides smuggling, is to be part of the construction boom fueled by the Counterattack on the wreckage left by allied bombs. The golden boy of reconstruction is Saad al-Zubaidi, a graduate of the Architectural Association in London's Bedford Square. Zubaidi, prematurely gray and brimming with brisk technocratic energy, runs the Idrisi Center, the government's reconstruction think tank. He explains that the moment the war ended, a "supreme committee" was assembled from all of the ministries to survey the damage and plan Iraq's comeback from what an apocalyptic U.N. report of the time described as a "pre-industrial" state. Zubaidi's job was to find solutions without importing parts and expertise. "We reinvented the suspension bridge." He rattles off cherished statistics on the achievements he has wrought with a "blank check" and a ministry staff of 28,000 people, beating every deadline.

As the house Zubaidi built for himself on a palm-lined street in the upscale district of Mansour attests, the rewards for the heroes of reconstruction are considerable. Indeed, anyone with a piece of the action is doing well. Dump-truck owners are getting a thousand dinars (roughly five times the average monthly wage) a day.

Saddam has anticipated the result of the American elections by expressing a desire to invite "ex-president Bush" to Iraq next year.

Rooting in his drink cabinet for a bottle of Glenfiddich ("No, no, Black Label is not good enough"), Zubaidi talks of the pride he feels that Iraqis are rebuilding on their own, offsetting their humiliation from the casual ease with which the allies bombed at will for six weeks last year. "More than 90 percent of the major bridges were built by foreign companies. The telephone exchanges, the power stations. All oil-exporting countries had a similar disease. They were totally dependent on foreigners. It was easier to send a telex to Japan when you needed something." It delights Iraqi managers like Zubaidi that foreign companies, who so readily turned over blueprints to the air staffs of the U.S. and Britain for targeting, are now losing multimillion-dollar contracts to rebuild. Sanctions cut both ways.

Iraq's patrician minister of industry, Amer al-Sa'adi, was until recently the military man in charge of all defense industries. He describes the effects of the bombing as "devastating. Nobody has any experience in this. There was nothing about it in the literature." (It is Sa'adi, it must be said, who deserved to win the *Babel* poll for most handsome minister.)

Sa'adi's assessment of the allied air campaign is cool. "There was careful planning and a lot of amateurish planning. They should know the difference between military warehouses and civilian cold stores. They chose a lot of fat targets. After a while, they were just looking at investment value." As the chief of military industry, Sa'adi was himself, in Pentagonspeak, a "lucrative target." "I kept moving," he remembers. "I never went home. I was within thirty meters of one cruise missile and I heard it coming. It was 11:10 in the morning of the first day. I threw myself into a ditch. Fortunately, it hit inside the building and the building protected me. After a while, they preferred sending them at night because some were being shot down. The cruise is either accurate or inaccurate. I think about half didn't find their target at all." He is puzzled by Pentagon planners' targeting of the civilian power grid. "All our bases had generators. The British and the Germans should have known that. They sold them to us."

Asked whether he was aware of the intense efforts in the first ten days of the war to target Saddam personally, Sa'adi shakes his head. "It was not obvious to me. The first wave fell on all the presidential palaces. Why would anyone think he would be there? We knew they were coming. It was just to hit expensive assets."

Sa'adi confirms that the cost of materials to rebuild the "assets" is "hundreds of millions of Iraqi dinars." As for the hefty sums flowing to contractors, he shrugs: "They just take the opportunity to make profits. They are not taxed really. The government was never very strict about that." The Baathists have become the party of business. With the New Deal for contractors, Saddam has gained some fast friends.

Keeping the civil service happy is another matter. With galloping inflation, government salaries are now below the poverty line. Perks have been liberally dished out to redress the imbalance. As


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one observer on the receiving end explains, "A lot of the ministers are building big houses now. The government gives them a plot of land, and they get a very cheap price on all the building materials. These are people, in some cases, who are just coming up in the world. They don't understand a Jacuzzi or a sauna. It has to be explained to them why a pool is a good idea. It makes them better than their neighbors."

Nor, it must be said, is the army being neglected. Gold Mother of Battle medals, bestowed by the fistful, come with cash. Some of them come with cars. The careful nurturing of Saddam's power base with such "gifts" gives weight to the firm assertion of Tariq Aziz that "the position of this government is a solid position." He speaks with confident contempt of reports that the Bush administration is moving to topple the regime through covert operations. "It does not make us feel nervous," he says, practically spitting for emphasis. "This is absurd. They would like to use it in the election campaign." When the plan fails, Bush "will appear as a very small politician acting on his own personal grudges."



Land of opportunity: Foreign companies are losing multimillion-dollar reconstruction contracts. Sanctions cut both ways.

Suddenly, a woman begins to scream. She is mad with grief. Her son was burned to death in this awful place.

All this rough confidence does not mean that Aziz is uninterested in the American election (although his boss has anticipated the result by expressing a desire to invite "ex-president Bush" to Iraq next year). He just wishes "Iraq was not an issue in the elections. . . . Kuwait is over. What else do you want?"

Expanding on the facts of life of Baath Party patronage, Aziz says, "There are hundreds of thousands of people and their families whose destiny is linked to this regime. This is not like Ceauşescu." Alluding to hopeful speculation in Washington about a possible coup from within the ranks of the military, Aziz smiles and says, "The second lieutenant who was in the army in 1968 [the year the Baathists took power] is now a general. When we speak about the army, they are all our own men. For every officer, there is a relative, a brother, a cousin, a brother-in-law in the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Communications. So how is this man going to organize a coup? Against his own people?

"It is true there is an opposition," Aziz concedes. "But who is that opposition? There isn't a Shiite opposition that is not pro-Iranian, paid by [Iranian president Hashemi] Rafsanjani, and the American administration is not interested in them. The Kurds? They cannot topple a regime in Baghdad. They can cause problems. They have always done that. But the Kurds cannot wage a civil war on the streets of Baghdad. I'm 100 percent sure that none of the Kurdish leaders would be foolish enough to organize a rebellion outside of Kurdistan." Aziz is dismissive of opposition leaders abroad. "Who are these people, these figures who are being paid by the C.I.A.? Thirty million of the C.I.A. budget, which is paid by the American taxpayer in this period of recession, would be spent on whom?"

Aziz relights his pipe. "Somebody called Saad Salih Jabr, son of the first prime minister in the royal regime to shoot civilian demonstrators in the streets? Thousands of people asked that he be hanged. Saad worked in business, and lately he has decided to be the leader of Iraq. What kind of power base does such a man have? Nothing." Then there's the former assistant chief of staff of the army, Hassan al-Naqib, who was an ambassador until he "decided to resign and become an opposition leader. He is the leader and the power base of his own self." Another exile leader, former U.N. ambassador Salah Umar Ali, gets the same treatment: "Leader of whom? Nobody. All of these persons who are being paid by King Fahd, by the C.I.A., they don't have a power base in this country. Mr. Bush is complicating his own situation. I am 100 percent sure this scheme is going to fail. Then what's he going to tell his people? To wage another war? That would be a very large bloodbath."

The conversation turns to the little matter of Kurdistan, now separated from the rest of Iraq by a freshly laid Maginot Line of land mines and faced with a blockade of all fuel shipments from Saddam's territory. Aziz vents his frustration. "Last summer, at this table, we reached a full agreement, 95 percent. Which is good. That's great." The Kurds said, " 'We'll be back in a matter of one or two weeks.' Then they didn't come." Aziz puts the blame on Jalal Talabani, one of the Kurdish leaders, who persuaded the others that they could not sign without conferring with the Americans. When the Kurds turned up in Washington, "they were told not to go ahead. 'Are you going to sign this with Saddam Hussein? It's going to strengthen his regime.' What is happening in Kurdistan is a mess. The Americans have helped create a mess." (The Kurds, on the other hand, still sifting through the rubble of four thousand villages destroyed by Saddam, their limbs being blown off by land mines, might reasonably enough regard those in the Baghdad regime as the principal authors of the "mess.")

The specter of the C.I.A.'s teaming up with the Kurds worries Aziz about as much as a highly advertised tour early this year by C.I.A. Director Robert Gates around the Middle East. "If Mr. Gates were doing a serious job in toppling the government of Iraq," says Aziz, sipping sweet tea from a fresh glass, "he wouldn't publicize it."

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Dispatches

These are lean days in Baghdad for the men who forged and nurtured the U.S.-Iraq relationship. At a quiet dinner at the Iraqi Hunting Club, the air is thick with nostalgia for Washington and the alliance. Nizar Hamdoon, now a deputy foreign minister, made his mark as Iraqi ambassador in the Reagan years. "The Potomac," he says wistfully, "reminds me of the Tigris." Ambassador Hamdoon achieved fame as one of Washington's great operators. His parties, he recalls fondly, were not as expensive as the Saudis', but they were better. He moved freely in the halls of power, persuading the Reagan men to funnel intelligence through him to Baghdad. Up-to-the-minute satellite photos of Iraq's battlefront with Iran, wide-ranging plans for arms supplies, not to mention massive trade deals, passed through his hands. Hamdoon had mastered a pitch on the dangers of the Iranian threat that prompted the U.S. assistance to Iraq. He muses now whether it might work a second time around.

As a beautifully browned two-by-three-foot Tigris fish is laid on the table, Sa'doon Zubaydi, Saddam's official translator, thinks sadly of "April." Ambassador April Glaspie, whose diplomatic career was the first casualty of the Gulf Crisis, was a favorite of Zubaydi's. "Poor April," he murmurs. "They made her a scapegoat." It is disconcerting hearing Zubaydi reminisce in affected English tones, laboriously acquired during his Shakespeare studies in Birmingham, England. ("I know this will absolutely shock you, but to me Birmingham is *such* a lovely city.") It was Zubaydi's voice that made the moment so chilling when Saddam asked British hostage "little Stuart" whether he was getting his "milk" and "cornflakes too." Tapping his lip neatly with his damask napkin, Zubaydi says with evident pride, "You know, I coined a word during the crisis. Absolutely everybody used it . . . 'guestages.' "

Ambassador Hamdoon clears his throat and turns the conversation to the current electoral campaign. He thinks that Bush may need another foreign adventure to pull up his numbers. Down the table Zubaydi is struck with a foreign-policy inspiration. "Qaddafi," exclaims the Shakespearean scholar. "Qaddafi could be an *out* for Bush. A replacement for Saddam Hussein." The table agrees that bombing Tripoli would be preferable to bombing, say, the Hunting Club.

Such wisdom from pro-American diplomats is going to waste now. They can no longer simply get on the phone and call George Shultz. Those days ended on August 2, 1990. All agree that in early 1990 there were "such high hopes for Bush." There is an awkward silence. "America," laments Zubaydi, "has lost a *very* good friend in the Middle East."

That's one way of putting it, but the successful U.S. campaign to maintain sanctions has given Saddam a very marketable scapegoat for his subjects' miseries. As Aziz puts it with blunt satisfaction, "The anger against the U.S. inside Iraq is growing." The highest-rated program on Iraqi television now is *Portfolio*, a day-by-day accounting of what happened during the bombing. Created and anchored by a former correspondent for Kuwaiti television who models his style on that of Alistair Cooke, *Portfolio* rivets Baghdadis, whose memory of the bombing is a confusion of blackouts, block parties, and deafening explosions. Even those who freely satirize "Himself" in conversation sit rapt in front of the set. As they listen to details of the 88,000 tons dropped, delivered in *Masterpiece Theatre* tones, they repeat in amazement the statistics for one day's load: "Four kilos of ordnance for each Iraqi." It is common currency now that the war was aimed at them—not at the army of occupation in Kuwait, not at the regime, but at *them*. Ongoing sanctions serve only to prove the point.

With the images flickering on the screen, there is also a wave of war nostalgia. Uday's friend the wild-boar hunter recalls happy days at his country house. "We had a great time, playing cards by candlelight, drinking, watching the cruise missiles going overhead." Across town, a war-anniversary dinner party reunites three families who floated from house to house during the bombing. One of the party announces he drank himself through the war. He is still drinking. His wife, a midwife, recalls "delivering babies in the dark. No candlelight even, just feeling for the head." In the private hospital where she works, things have improved. "We had some American journalists come in. They said, 'We want to see a child dying of malnutrition.' I told them they had come to the *wrong hospital*." Tucking into a plateful of lasagna and dumplings, for this is a well-connected group, she sighs, "The war was great for losing weight."

Overeating is not a typical problem for the middle class. At a dinner thrown by a downwardly mobile Baghdad cou-



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ple (she's a decorator, he's a university professor), the ingredients for the casserole are chick-peas, yogurt, and U.S.D.A. ham. The ham was airlifted by U.S. forces last year to Kurds starving in the mountains. "The Kurds," explains the hostess, "don't eat ham. Only the Christians do. They dropped this on the Kurds, killed some Kurds underneath, and we get it now in the market."

For those who cannot make their fortunes in smuggling or contracting, everyday crime has increasing appeal as a way to feed the family. Cars disappear regularly, even from the lot of the Palestine Hotel, one of the prime residences for the five-hundred-strong U.N. contingent in Baghdad. Iraqis shake their heads and murmur, "Ali Baba." The fire sale of Kuwait set the tone. A midnight-blue Fleetwood parked outside the fashionable Mudheef restaurant is "Ali Baba Kuwait." Houses are now carefully guarded, in a country where doors were once routinely left unlocked.

The most popular racket is counterfeiting dinars. Millions of phony notes are surfacing, some little better than Xeroxes. "A friend was arrested last week for having a two-tone copy machine, which was broken," explains an Iraqi engineer. "He vanished into one of the security-service prisons. He only got out because we had a friend who was building a house for an important minister and was able to convince him that this kind of copier can't be used for making dinar notes. He was released because of this high connection."

Aside from counterfeiting, the most active criminals are committing highway robbery. The road south to Basra is far too dangerous to travel at night. The men in a busload of travelers were recently ordered to strip to their underwear by gunmen (the ladies were told to avert their eyes) and forced to travel on for hours in the bitter cold only to be humiliated by peals of laughter at the Basra bus depot.

Basra, gateway to the Gulf in the old days, is where the claims of triumphant reconstruction start to look threadbare. The city, battered by shellfire in the eight years of war with Iran, pummeled by thousands of "dumb" bombs from the U.S. Air Force and Navy, and trashed again in the short-lived Shia revolt after the war, is far away from the "prestige projects" of Baghdad. In addition to the ubiquitous rubble and steep prices, the water supply from the mains—clogged with sewage and salt—once as safe as Evian, is lethally filthy.

In spite of the mess, the hellish scenes of last summer, when tiny corpses piled up in ovenlike wards and typhoid victims were crammed two to a bed, have disappeared, for the time being. Foreign aid has been flooding into Basra (though at nowhere near the levels of that being bestowed on the more telegenic Kurds, in the far north). UNICEF, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, Médecins sans Frontières—all are feverishly distributing baby formula, purifying water, performing mass vaccinations. But the fragile nature of it all becomes clear only in frank conversation with the aid professionals. As one UNICEF worker explained, "We're almost out of money. Our donors are getting bored with Iraq."

Lily Bouldoukian, the weathered Armenian public-health manager in Basra for Save the Children, is, in this part of the world, the matriarch of aid workers. On a chilly Sunday morning, she receives visitors in her untidy boudoir, wearing an old housecoat and chain-smoking Kents. Her credentials are impressive: sixteen years in civil-war Lebanon, months in earthquake-devastated Armenia. It seems everyone in Basra knows Lily.

In a deep, smoky voice, she lays out the problems. The water-purification system, wrecked by the bombing, "needs billions." The patients who turn up at the health centers "have no resistance to infection." The mass immunizations do not work, because "when you are malnourished, the vaccine is not effective." Although typhoid subsided, "acute respiratory infection, gastroenteritis, and rheumatic fever are up. The number of patients has increased." To round off the picture, she adds, "premature babies have doubled. Many are dying at home." There are not enough syringes or lab tests for hepatitis B. "If we leave now," she says, drawing slowly on her cigarette, "everything goes down the drain." She has lived here since May of 1991, but is still stunned by the scale of this man-made disaster. "This is a place," she marvels, "where the biggest problem before the war was overfeeding. Doctors used to give mothers advice about *overfeeding* their children." The government is importing no medicine, and, like UNICEF, her organization is on the point of having to pull out. "Save the Children U.S.," she says, "has run out of money."

When Bouldoukian makes her rounds in Basra, she says, "they ask me, 'Are you doing something so your sins will be forgiven?' They say it is an American occupation. They say, 'Bush didn't care.' "

Far up the chain of command, Deputy

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Dispatches

Health Minister Dr. Shawky Marcus is angry. Foreign governments, he says, are refusing to release Iraqi assets to pay for medicines theoretically exempt from sanctions, or even to allow shipment of medicines and medical supplies bought and paid for before the crisis. Flourishing a list of foreign suppliers, he points to the carefully tabulated amounts and dates of payment. "Here, $39,744 to Med-Tek on Fifth Avenue. Nothing has been sent. The Japanese government, after ten years of imports, didn't let TB vaccine go through. TB vaccine." (Med-Tek strongly denies owing Iraq any shipments of medical equipment.) His voice is rising. "I am a doctor, and I ask you, from the legal, contractual, and human point of view, can you receive cash and not send the goods?

"One British company," he adds, "got a list of urgent requirements. Three weeks later they said, 'This is not through diplomatic channels.' So we got the Foreign Ministry to send them. Then came Christmas. Then the company said the list had to come through the Iraqi central bank. O.K. We did that. Till now, we haven't heard anything. We have received none of the medicine we paid for on a contractual basis. We have received only drops in the sea from NGOs [the aid groups]. That's all. That's all."

Dr. Marcus is wondering what he can say that will make a difference. "If you have a kid who gets appendicitis, you go to the hospital and the doctor can't do anything. How would you feel? We have lost 31,000 under five," he says abruptly, "86,000 over five. Let me ask the Sanctions Committee [the U.N. body that rules on exports to Iraq], why did they block nitrous oxide used for anesthesia for pregnant women? Can you operate a cesarean section without nitrous oxide? No. Well, what about a country of 18 million people?"

The rage that is building after two years of sanctions is directed at one man, George Bush. The ultimate irony is that, while Bush promotes sanctions as the way to bring down Saddam, the Iraqi leader has found them supremely useful in shoring up his political base. Thus Iraqis, squirming under the Baathist boot, harbor unworthy suspicions that the old alliance still endures. A doctor surveying his wardful of sick children observes in a low voice, "Let me tell you, George Bush is Saddam Hussein's best friend."

Saddam has always said, Iraqis note, that the war was against "the Iraqi people," a separate issue from the widely unpopular invasion of Kuwait. One Iraqi matron, who does not hide her disdain for "Him," says, "The kiddies think we won the war. They're indoctrinated at school. 'He' has become very popular again. He stood up to thirty-one countries and *they* withdrew." Perhaps because casualties in Kuwait were low, the war is fading from memory, replaced now by the standoff, the U.S. versus Iraq. "Not many soldiers died in the war. Maybe fewer than 25,000. All the boys we know who were there walked home. They deserted. No one we know was killed."

The memory of war death in Baghdad, however, is very stark. The anniversary of the bombing of the Amariya shelter, when two direct allied hits incinerated upwards of three hundred women and children, is a macabre event. The ceremony, produced by the cinema department of the Ministry of Information, draws streams of mourners in black chadors. Outside the shelter, in V.I.P. seats, the families of the dead are asked to sit and be viewed. They sit hour after hour.

Inside, the blackened walls and the ugly bomb crater with its skirt of twisted metal are lit by tall, medieval candles. Their smoke turns, as the day wears on, into an almost impenetrable gloom. In a side chamber, a chanting children's choir lines the walk to a grim altar, where a priest is saying Mass. The prescribed tour route is banked by wreaths for the dead, still in crisp plastic wrapping. There is an eddy in the crowd as the minister of information, unkindly known as "Rent-a-thug," walks briskly through the scene, flanked by heavily armed guards. He has a dissipated face with eyebrows that look painted on. Suddenly, a woman begins to scream hysterically. She is mad with grief. Her son was burned to death in this awful place. The crowd surges around her. There is real anger here, tapped in an artfully calculated manner to revive the hate.

Uday, Saddam's son and heir, was not among those present at the Amariya spectacle. At the National Restaurant, a world away, he puffs languidly on his Havana and says, "You must go to the little people. They will tell you that since the war they are anti-American. They will tell you that." He may be right. But the little people, amid their troubles, are also whispering the name "Uday." The excesses at his table may one day draw the angry crowd from Amariya over to the National. □

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MR. ROBERTS GOES TO WASHINGTON

Everything is going right for Tim Robbins, including his directorial debut, *Bob Roberts*, an eerily prescient comedy about a populist multimillionaire political candidate

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY



Roberts: Fascist yuppie populist with a beat.

The gods must be crazy about Tim Robbins. Not only has everything else been going the way of the star of *The Player*, but now current events seem to be cooperating as well. *Bob Roberts*, the brilliant mock documentary—or mockumentary, if you will—he wrote and directed about an extreme right-wing multimillionaire musician-businessman who defeats a U.S. senator from Pennsylvania (played by eternal senatorial wannabe Gore Vidal), opens next month, right along with the general election. It will create loud buzzing on both coasts and be hailed as the *Player* of politics, a comparison that will seem all the more pointed for the movie's positively Altmanesque raft of actors in cameos who worked for scale, allowing Robbins to bring the movie in for a measly $4 million: Alan Rickman, Susan Sarandon, James Spader, Fred Ward, Bob Balaban, Pamela Reed, Peter Gallagher.

The election-season release date was planned from the start. But when Robbins began shooting last November, Slick Willie Clinton had yet to reveal his sax appeal on *Arsenio*, and Ross Perot was just another Texas billionaire with a bad haircut. "I had no idea," Robbins chuckles, "a billionaire would be running." As for Clinton's attention-getting saxophone gig, "*that*," Robbins says, with even greater amusement, "was surreal. It's funny how many different things are falling into place."

Yes it is. Bob Roberts would seem to be very much a man of the moment (every bit as implausible as, say, Ross Perot). He's a guitar-strumming financier, a "rebel conservative" who made his first $40 million by the age of thirty-five. He got his M.B.A. at Yale. (An inaccuracy, by the way: Yale does not have an M.B.A. program, but the Bush connection is made.) His Vision Thing? He wants to hang drug dealers—among other criminals—cut taxes, cut spending, but not the military (he wants more bombs and high-tech gadgetry to make the Persian Gulf safe for American business), toss welfare mothers into the street, and bring back school prayer. More like the Vision Thing from Another Planet. You can almost hear him say, with Ross Perot, *It won't be pretty, but I'll get the job done*. He's an outsider who'll go to Washington to throw the bums out, the bums being the liberals, of course, being the ones who've gotten us into this mess. (An uncanny fore-echo of Bush's blaming L.B.J. for the L.A. riots; the film was on its way to Cannes when the Rodney King verdict came in.)

Roberts crisscrosses the great state of Pennsylvania in his campaign bus, *The Pride*, occasionally jumping out to fence—with épée and rapier, that is—with aides, or to hop onto a motorcycle. His aides are constantly speaking fluent Japanese and German to overseas investors. Clearly, Bob is not the sort of politician to put his money into a blind trust. "Trust me," one aide says into his headset with a smile straight out of *Liar's Poker*, "hang on to those puts!" It's *Tanner '88* with a bit of *Nashville*, and a lot of *This Is Spinal Tap*. Bob's music videos are shown, among them his "Wall Street Rap," an homage to D. A. Pennebaker's cinéma vérité take on Bob Dylan, *Don't Look Back*.

Roberts's campaign manager is the nefarious Lucas Hart III, played with exquisite, deadpan menace by British actor Alan Rickman, the best bad guy in the business (*Die Hard*, *Robin Hood*). Together, Roberts and Hart represent an amalgam of all the alleged criminals of

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the Reagan era. They've managed to loot an S&L, and their company, Broken Dove, has stolen money meant for public housing to buy a fleet of contra-supplying planes that, naturally, have been smuggling cocaine. Broken Dove is now the anti-drug centerpiece of Bob's campaign. Orwell, by way of Altman. "Be good in school," Bob Roberts counsels a young girl, "and don't do crack—it's a ghetto drug!"

At the height of the election campaign, Bob is given a guest-host slot on a *Saturday Night Live*–type show. A female staffer angrily protests about this "fascist yuppie," but the Lorne Michaels character tells her, "Network wants him on," implying that Bob is the General Electric candidate. (For the extra point, name another G.E.-sponsored presidential candidate; *Bob,* by the way, grew out of a skit Robbins did for *S.N.L.* a few years back.)

After the staffer pulls the plug on Bob in mid-song, he's gunned down—or is he?—in a hallway outside the studio. The fall-guy gunman is a hyper, lefty journalist named Bugs Raplin, who works for a newspaper called *The Troubled Times Journal*. Hart, with enough sinister C.I.A., Phoenix Program, connections in his past to give the Christic Institute a heart attack, snarls into the nearest microphone, "The fact that men like Raplin exist shows what you get with a liberal agenda! You pump people full of drugs and pipe dreams and what happens? They come gunning for people like Bob! Well, those folks don't realize something: you can't kill the truth! Bob Roberts is not going to be stopped by any bullet! He'll be back, and, man, you better watch out, because he's headed straight for Washington!"

It will be interesting to watch Bill Clinton, Ross Perot, and Bob Roberts converge on Washington together this fall. There is, to judge from the polls coming in during this wild and woolly political season, a whole lotta anger going on out there.

Bob is, to be sure, closer to, if indeed indistinguishable in philosophy from, those now spent and sputtering rockets of the right Mr. Duke and Mr. Buchanan than to the Big Three, but like the five-foot-six entry from Dallas, he has definitely tapped into the anger with his *It's broke and I can fix it* message. This was prescient of *his* handler, Mr. Robbins, whose own, considerable anger is directed not only at the old reliables of the Reagan era but also at his own party.

"One of my biggest problems with the Democratic Party," he says, "is how much they're trying to be Republicans. There are no true carriers of the flame out there." Except perhaps for Jerry Brown, for whom Robbins snuck out to do a few photo ops while he was editing his movie. "I like Brown. He stirred things up a little bit." Robbins says he will "probably vote defensively for Bill Clinton" in November, "but I really do not like his record on capital punishment or the environment. I think that he leaves a lot to be desired. I'm mostly angry at the Democratic Party. I think we were spoon-fed a candidate from the very start."

At the end of the closing credits, the word VOTE appears large on the screen, making *Bob* a kind of public-service message, which, given the movie's perfect-pitch hipness, may just drive a few self-loathing yuppies into the polling booths (in their Range Rovers).

"I'm trying to stress," says Robbins, "that I believe it's very, very important to vote. Too often people do not vote because of the two or three movie stars at the top. If they don't like any of them, they stay away from the poll booths. I think that's dangerous. I'm encouraging people to vote for all the candidates, for referendums, local issues that affect them directly. I believe there can be change, but that it has to happen at a local level first. And in order to do that, you have to show up and vote. If you want more of the same, stay away."

It's possible, then, that the movie will do for this generation what *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* did for an earlier one. In one scene that should become a quotable focal point of the nineties *Zeitgeist,* Bugs Raplin rants into the camera, "There are no Mr. Smiths in Washington! Mr. Smith has been bought!" Doubtless it will be observed that Jimmy Stewart went on to become a Republican and a pal of Ronald Reagan's.

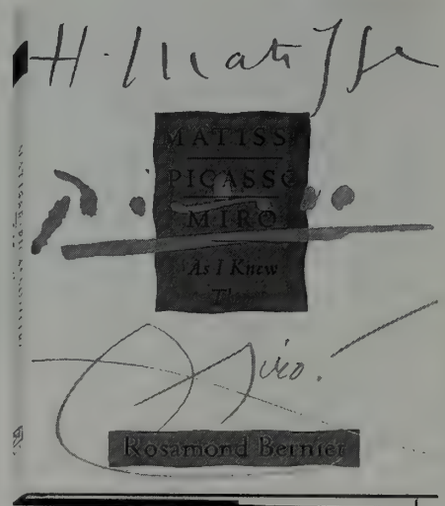
Among the people I asked along to the screening—you expect me to form an opinion without a focus group?—was a savvy *Washington Post* political reporter who said afterward, "This is the kind of movie that Oliver Stone would make if he had a sense of humor." *Bob Roberts* is Robbins's Grand Unified Theory of Paranoid Politics. The Big Fix is in. Our destinies are ruled by Big Business, especially weapons contractors, TV Networks, and the National Security Council. No sooner is Bob elected than he gets an admiring let-

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ter from the head of a company "specializing in waste management and genetic engineering. Our philosophy here is much in tune with yours. In fact, we play 'This Land' ['Is My Land,' a nice inversion of Woody Guthrie's sixties anthem] before all our board meetings." One of the movie's defter messages is in the way it subverts the sixties' tools of protest. Robbins is reluctant to "slam on" the late Lee Atwater, who managed to jam with B.B. King while demonizing Willie Horton, but allows as how Atwater "confirmed a notion I had that one of the clever things the Republican Party has been doing is co-opting the images of the sixties for their own benefit."

The press is complicit. With the exception of the manic Bugs Raplin, who is hot on Bob's trail, most of the reporters in *Bob* have bought into the Bob line—somewhat like the early response to Perot—including the very lovely Tawna Titan from WFAC-TV, played by Ms. Sarandon, the mother of Robbins's children. Robbins is no fan of the press, electronic or print. He faults it for a lack of "vigilancy," for being ratings-obsessed and therefore entertainment-oriented. He is, he says, *still* waiting for the media to get to the bottom of Iran-contra. "I find most of the stories I'm looking for on page 22." He is not the kind of actor who hires an "issues person" to advise him. He does his own reading, and if he doesn't think he knows enough about an issue, he says so. "I'm not too well versed in him yet," he says on the subject of Perot, who does, however, "scare me. I've got to do my homework." (Yes, please, may we have more of *this* from Hollywood?) Robbins gets his political information from *The New York Times*, which he reads every day, and from *The Nation* and *The Village Voice*. How about *The New Republic*? "No," he says, "I don't like them. They've really . . . changed, haven't they?"

Completing the evil triad that rules America is the N.S.C. The denouncing of this falls to Gore Vidal, playing Senator Brickley Paiste, an exhausted liberal. This bit of casting was inspired. "I couldn't think of a more perfect person to play a United States senator," says Robbins, "because, well, wouldn't it be great if he was?" He sent the script off to Vidal, fully expecting him to turn it down, only to get a quick phone call saying, "I'd like to wear a bow tie."

To paraphrase Vidal on the death of Truman Capote, taking the role was "a wise career move." He brings to it flair, levity, and a porcine sort of *gravitas*, assisted by the additional fifty or so pounds of avoirdupois. He is perhaps too much of a good thing. As a presidential biographer in my focus group put it, "He was excellent as a performer, but when he went into his late-night-TV spiel about the United States' being secretly governed by the N.S.C., you could quite clearly see his eyes glazing over. How many millions of times have we heard that? I'm sure it wasn't scripted." (It wasn't. In the N.S.C. and C.I.A. scenes, Robbins let the old boy go, Let Gore Be Bore. Watch for him this fall on every talk show in sight.)

The ending is a bit of a downer—a real downer, in fact. The movie is so fast, so funny, so deft, then—*thud*, we're staring up at the writing on the wall of the Jefferson Memorial. Inspiring words, to be sure, but the overall effect is a bit like eating a soufflé that suddenly turns to lead in your stomach—as if *Spinal Tap* had ended with an endorsement for rock-music warning labels.

Robbins concedes that it does get somber in the end, but says, "It's really important to the movie. If we'd ended with the [deleted so as not to ruin your fun] scene, a lot of things would not have been addressed that were necessary to address." Some executives "suggested" an alternative ending, he admits, but he retained the contractual right to Just Say No. "If there was something feel-good or up about the ending, it might mean something economically," Robbins shrugs. No, correction: no one "shrugs" off many millions of dollars. "But it wouldn't be the film I wanted to do."

Asked if the Jefferson Memorial scene is an homage to Mr. Smith (who repairs for his spiritual succor to the Lincoln Memorial), Robbins says that, no, "I think it's an homage to Jefferson. I find it the most moving monument of all. There's something so eloquent and inspiring about it. '*I will oppose any kind of tyranny over the mind of man.*' Jefferson represents to me a certain amount of hope. If we can look to what he's written about the press, and democracy, and religion, and can honor that as our heritage, we can solve a lot of our problems."

Finally, then, who *is* Bob?

Robbins thinks about this. (He is a thoughtful person.) "I like to think of him as the young George Bush, with a guitar," he finally laughs. Yes, of course—a thousand points of spite! □

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[We saved the best part for last.]



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EXPATRIATE GAMES

From the far corners of his self-imposed exile, James Hamilton-Paterson—whose new book is published in the U.S. this month—is quietly becoming one of England's greatest writers

BY LUKE JENNINGS

"Forget Bruce Chatwin," says the writer Andrew Harvey, fellow of All Souls, Oxford University. "Forget Martin Amis, forget Julian Barnes and the rest of them. Our best writer by far, and I mean *by far,* is James Hamilton-Paterson. If he is all but unknown, it is because in a trashy, sophomorically obsessed generation he has chosen real solitude, real stoicism."

Hamilton-Paterson is a British literary exile, a fifty-year-old author-poet of almost anchorite privacy. Although he has been writing for a quarter of a century, his small but well-placed constituency of readers agree that the beginning of his significant work was marked by the publication, in 1986, of *The View from Mount Dog,* a collection of short stories. Since then Hamilton-Paterson has produced the semi-autobiographical *Playing with Water* and two novels: *Gerontius,* the winner of the 1989 Whitbread First Novel Award, and *The Bell-Boy* (published in America as *That Time in Malomba*).

When *Playing with Water* was published in America in 1987, it sold a total of 150 copies in hardcover and elicited a single review, in a midwestern newsletter. Only three years later was the book finally dragged into critical daylight, by a laudatory notice from William H. Gass in the paperback section of *The New York Times Book Review*. "James Hamilton-Paterson," wrote Gass, "is an Englishman, as I said he'd almost have to be, a middle-class university graduate who, by dint of eccentricity, disappointment and some misanthropy, has become a dedicated traveler, diver, writer and fisherman. He can contrive a spear from a length of power cable and a barb from a bent nail."

Playing with Water is an account of several seasons alone on a Philippine island, which the author calls "Tiwarik." It is a place of cool streaming winds and rapturous ultramarine descents, but for Hamilton-Paterson it is much more: from its coral shingle he sees, refracted by time, a childhood spent under sadder skies; he draws his readers below the surface, into a less illuminated landscape, a place of mutability, calcified hope, and loss. "I was reminded . . . while I was reading *Playing with Water,*" wrote Gass, "of those intense and aimlessly happy hours spent in the pages of books before I became a professional skimmer and scanner and interpreter of texts, and how immersed my soul was in the superior spirit of another."

Five years after the publication of *Playing with Water,* James Hamilton-Paterson has produced *The Great Deep,* an expanded meditation on man's relationship with the sea, which Random House is publishing in America this month. In the course of his research the author undertook a tour of duty aboard a vessel mapping the Pacific floor, trawled with the North Sea fishing fleet, and drifted with pirates and nomads in the "Conrad country" of the Sulu Archipelago.

His search for transcendental order yields beautifully made prose ("transparent," says Harvey, "with opaque, flinty edges") but little comfort. While there are still nights, Hamilton-Paterson writes, "when it is hard for a swimmer to resist heading downwards, trailing constellations in a fading dust," for the most part the sea is lost to us. In northern waters, fishing nets drag up sex dolls and drums of toxic sludge; in the tropics, whole islands and undersea architectures have been re-

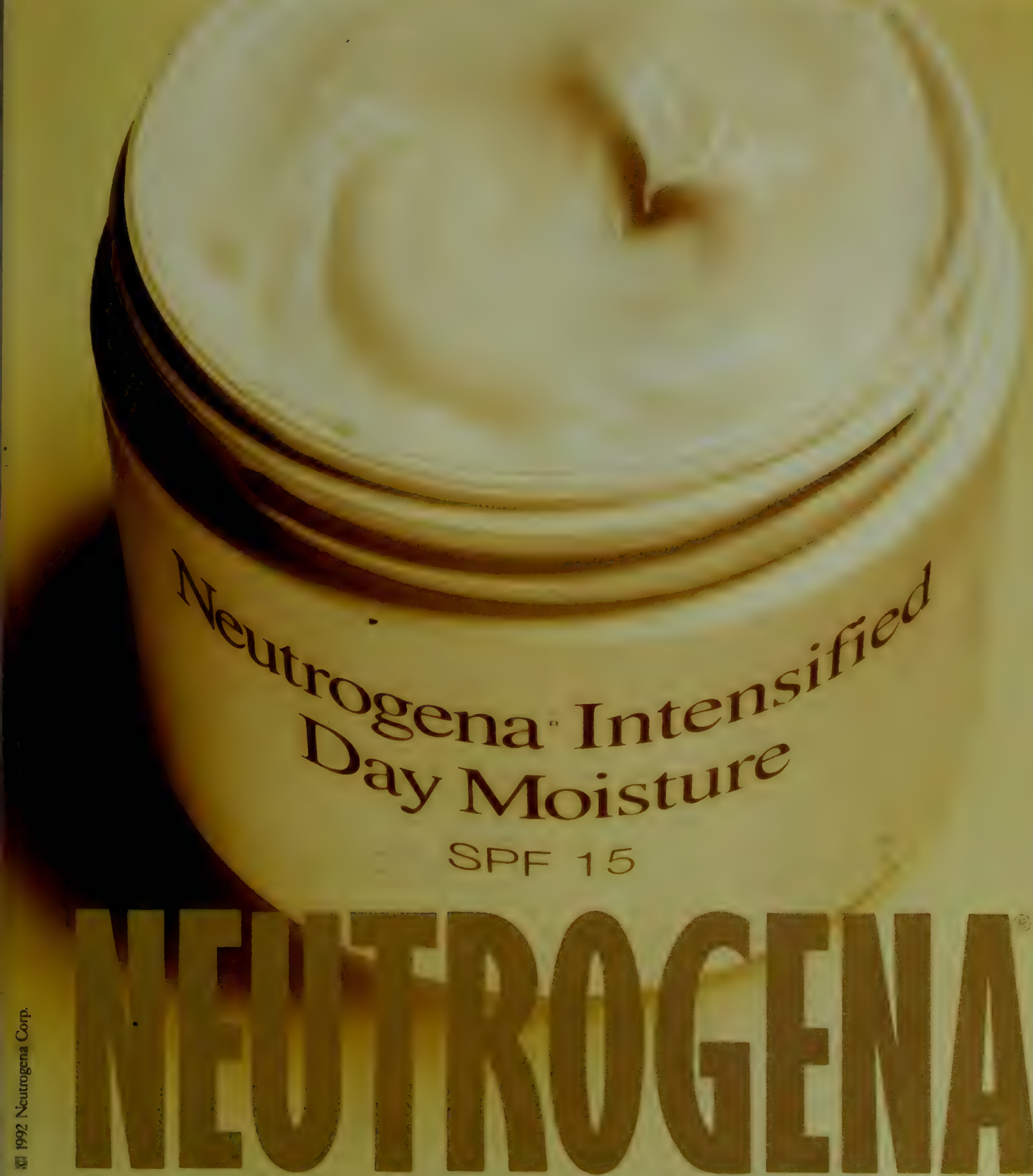


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vised for the consumption of *Homo supermercatus*, kitted out with the "standard furniture" of "scuba gear, water skis, hang gliders, beach barbecues, rock music, drunks, whores."

Yet Hamilton-Paterson finds no common cause with conservationists. "The present generation is as much contaminated by its own reverential and placatory attitude as the older was by domination," he writes in *The Great Deep*. "Above all, the self-interest shows through. Luckily, there is a chasm properly and forever fixed between the nonhuman and the Humanist biospheres, between wildness and *caring*."

"He was one of those Englishmen, like Isherwood, who couldn't bear England," says Martin Amis.

"I'm frankly not interested in publicity," James Hamilton-Paterson tells me before a pre-publication gathering in London for his new book. "I have the feeling that I'm writing for a total of no more than three thousand people, so why bother?"

Amid the standard furniture of Random Century House, senior booksellers have been convened to meet the author of *The Great Deep* (published in Great Britain under the title *Seven-Tenths*). Wine in hand, publishers and booksellers stand in an inward-facing circle; they all know one another. At a table outside this conversational circle, half-concealed, sits the author. Hamilton-Paterson is a quiet, watchful figure, very tanned, and clearly possessed of what the novelist Ronald Blythe, a longtime friend, describes as "the physical confidence of the wellborn."

It is a confidence, though, that on occasions such as these is deliberately muted, effaced. Inquiries are met by the distracted passing of a hand through sparse, untidy hair and by a pale gaze which is briefly attentive but soon slides into more general focus. His clothes are worn like a repertory costume: the jacket has clearly been taken from storage; the tie is the tie of a man who owns only one. "James," says Blythe, "travels lighter than anyone you've ever met."

Yet Hamilton-Paterson is not completely unknowing in these outsider attitudes. His voice, when it comes, has a startling, almost actorish projection, and although he would clearly rather be elsewhere, one senses in his mild courtesies a definite enjoyment of the "honorable schoolboy" identity he has assumed for the occasion.

He is signing copies, and making the job last as long as possible. Eventually he stands, surprising those booksellers who, until this moment, have been under the impression that *I* am James Hamilton-Paterson. *The Great Deep*, the author is told, is proving hard to classify. After some disagreement, it has been decided that it will be displayed on the Travel shelves. Hamilton-Paterson nods courteously, loosens the tie, and is gone. Like Bruce Chatwin before him, he is unhappy with the travel-writer label, but can't be bothered to argue. To argue is to invite further involvement, to sacrifice invisibility. And for all that his work has not escaped notice, Hamilton-Paterson has so far succeeded in maneuvering himself into a series of literary blind spots which have utterly confounded publicists. He could climb the stairs of London's Groucho Club, in the inconceivable event of his wishing to, completely unrecognized. "Even twenty years ago, when he lived here, one never saw that much of him," remembers the writer John Cornwell, a former colleague, "and then came a point at which he just seemed to disappear altogether."

"He was one of the cleverer and funnier people I came across at that time," says Martin Amis, who knew Hamilton-Paterson in Oxford. "But I certainly got the impression he wasn't going to hang around. He was one of those Englishmen, like Isherwood, who couldn't bear England. I think that he came from that tradition of wellborn boys who felt so oppressed by their families—and, by extension, by England—that they could only survive by putting hundreds or even thousands of miles between it and them."

Hamilton-Paterson remembers Amis's asking him for advice on becoming a novelist. " 'It's difficult, you see,' Martin said to me, 'because I have this father. . . ' " Hamilton-Paterson encouraged Amis to brave the comparisons, to go ahead and write novels. Today he finds Amis's work "brilliant but chilly," and is dismissive of the "shallow, fashionable" nature of most contemporary fiction.

"The problem lies, as much as anywhere else, in the awards systems. In my opinion it is not enough that the winners are seen to win; the losers must be seen to lose. If the Booker Prize runners-up, for example, were stripped naked in the Guildhall and thrashed with nettles. . . "

Hamilton-Paterson does find praise for a handful of authors. Don DeLillo's *White Noise* is "a wonderfully written book," and Gilbert Adair's *Love and Death in Long Island* is "extremely accomplished, extremely moving." For the most part, though, he feels that he is missing little in his nonassociation with the British literary establishment. This is hardly surprising, as Martin Amis remarks, "given James's disenchantment with all things British, and all things establishment."

"What you have to understand," says another writer, "is that there was a point at Oxford when James was so politically correct one hardly dared *speak*."

Hamilton-Paterson does not feel it part of his business to be critically supportive of the writers he left behind in London and Oxford. He is suspicious of the business of "mutual reviewing," which he sees as "a leg-up process for the second-rate." The success of Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot*, for example, he finds "incomprehensible. The idea's a good one, but the book's simply not well enough written."

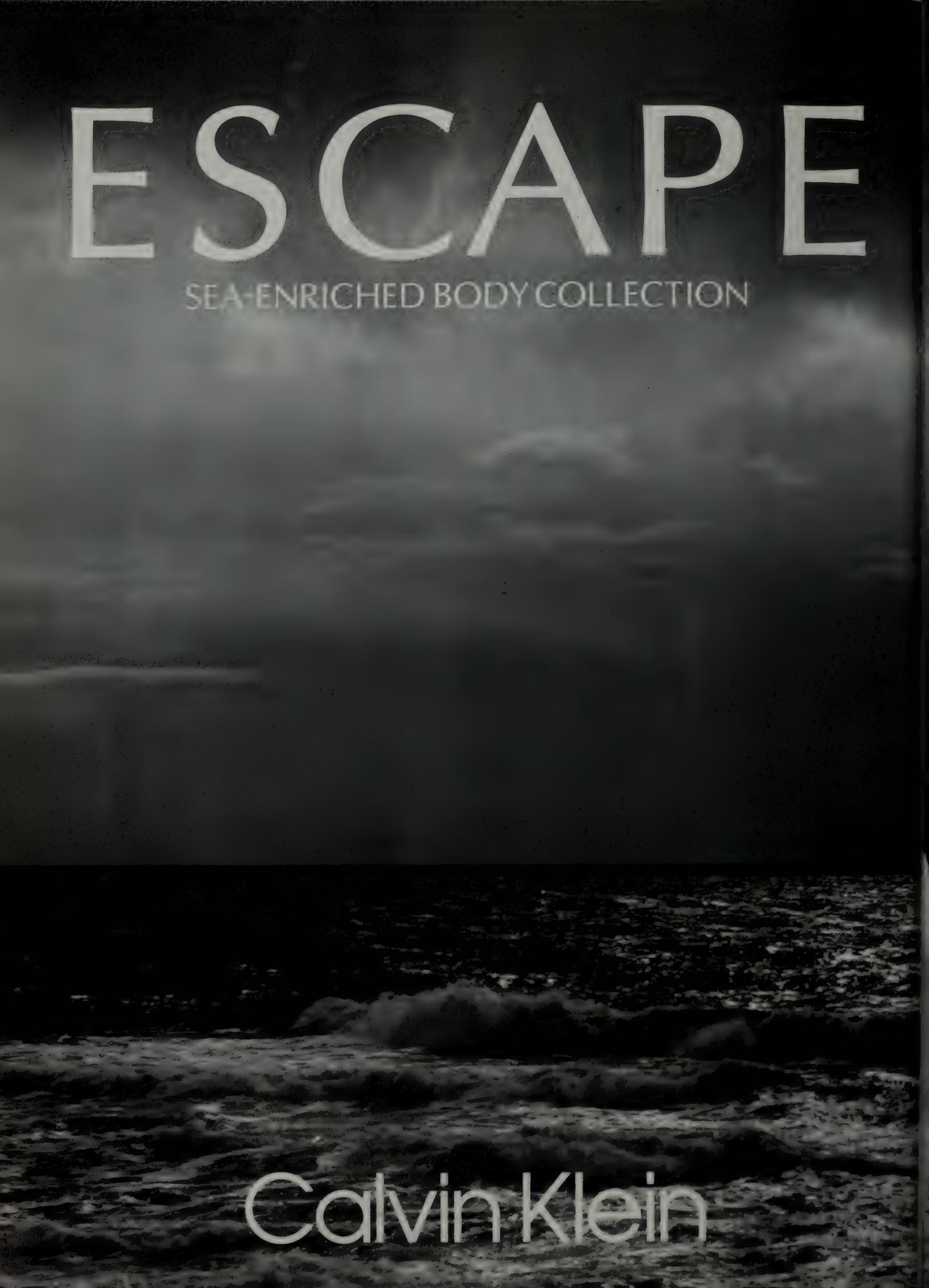
"A lot of modern novels," he says, "seem to be entirely two-dimensional: they have an accomplished, even glittering surface, but no resonance; their authors appear to be paying no attention to their own psyches. As a result they aren't writing *out* of themselves but simply *onto* a screen. It ought to be creative, but it never is. It's actually utterly Thatcherite, the literary equivalent of that heartless postmodern architecture which could be by absolutely anybody. And it's all written with an eye cocked for prizes, as if for some putative literary jury. . . . It's knowing, in short, but it's not knowledgeable."

His enthusiasm for certain nonfiction styles is equally restrained. "There is a kind of political journalism," writes Hamilton-Paterson in the notes to *Playing with Water*, "which, incredibly, tries to sell the *author*. It relies not on an intimate knowledge of a country but on the imagined purity of the literary eye." ("Sounds like James writing about South America in *The New Statesman*," says one critic and contemporary.) "When this kind of journalist," continues Hamilton-Paterson, "turns his attention to a country the reader happens to know and love his writing produces anguish and anger, not least among the politically literate and serious natives of that country who actually go through the nasty



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business of poverty and persecution and dying young so that the writer may bear off his holiday snaps in triumph. In the case of the Philippines such a writer has recently been demolished by Benedict Anderson in his savage and funny essay 'James Fenton's Slide-show.' "

Remarks of this sort have made him anything but popular. "James Hamilton-Paterson," reports a senior member of the British literary establishment, "was, and is, a poisonous toad."

For the last decade Hamilton-Paterson has divided his time between a hut in the Philippine hinterland and a remote Apennine-mountain farmhouse. It is to Italy that he flies the morning after being passed under the noses of the booksellers, and it is here, a week later, that I climb from his Land Rover after a lurching six-mile ascent from the nearest village.

The house stands on a shelf of rock among pines, and here on his own turf, a belting north wind flattening his faded blue overalls to his body, Hamilton-Paterson is a different man. He is proprietary, congenial, visibly happy in his solitary command of the mountain and the misted plain below. He bought the near-derelict farmhouse eleven years ago; he has since restored it himself, using the building's original mountain-stone blocks and red clay roofing tiles.

The result is an almost ecclesiastical mixture of the austere and the expansive. There is no electricity, no decoration other than that provided by the rough dressing of the stone walls and the timbers ("I'm not one of those Tuscan *house queens!*"), but there is a record player driven by a small generator, a heated-rainwater shower, and a well-stocked library, where Hamilton-Paterson plans to situate a Steinway grand piano.

"The mountain's inaccessibility," says Hamilton-Paterson of his home in Tuscany, "should be good for a few decades yet, at least until my death."

Despite the ruthless absence of any feminine element, the house's comfort is absolute. A wood-burning stove provides heat in winter, while outside, in summer, a vine trellis provides shade. In the evenings we eat by the light of an oil lamp; Hamilton-Paterson produces several liters of local wine and proves, unsurprisingly, a skillful dismemberer of mountain rabbits.

As he explains, this is very much the unfashionable side of Tuscany, a long way from literary London's summer annexes to the west. Here the farmers have left the mountains, and in the villages the bar owners are worried by the incursions of the Mafia. The nearest property is a looted shell half a mile's brambly walk away, abandoned by its tenant when poverty forced him to the edge of suicide.

"The mountain's inaccessibility," says Hamilton-Paterson, "should be good for a few decades yet, at least until my own death." He shares the slopes with wild boar, for the most part invisible, and with a cat that visits the farmhouse for a few minutes each day in order to share his supper. "We enjoy," says the author, delivering himself of a shaded smile, "a near-perfect relationship."

On a June day in 1953, James Hamilton-Paterson, then aged twelve, sat in an English classroom and, from his imagination, drew a map in an exercise book. In 1986, thirty-three years later, the book was returned to him by his mother. To his amazement he recognized in the map drawn on the penultimate page the exact contours of Tiwarik, the tiny and otherwise uninhabited Philippine island on which he had lived for much of the previous two years. The discovery of this arc, this bow, hooped over his life provoked a "silent concussion" in Hamilton-Paterson, and seemed to give coherence to a life which, until then, had appeared unreadable. Mark Cousins, the writer and lecturer in psychoanalysis, has been a close friend of Hamilton-Paterson's for twenty-three years. He finds rational meaning and confirmation in the incident.

"There are certain shapes, certain forms, certain objects, that go on calmly and persistently repeating themselves throughout a person's life. Even in childhood, I think, they relate to loss, to something that has always been lost. So I think that it must have been a particular satisfaction for James to stumble on one of these lost objects on the other side of the world." In 1984, Hamilton-Paterson had agreed, not without a wry glance in the mirror, to write a "Book of Exiles" for the Oxford University Press. One morning, however, sitting at his typewriter in the Philippines, he quite simply abandoned the idea.

"Bugger this, I thought. And started there and then on the first of a series of short stories."

The collection was published in 1986 as *The View from Mount Dog*. With the exception of a trio of children's tales, it was the first fiction Hamilton-Paterson had ever written. Its stories explored the elements which had variously ordered and disordered his life. Principal among these was that acute consciousness of vestigial loss often sentimentally characterized as "Englishness."

Loss. The word, the idea, is returned to time and again by Hamilton-Paterson. We are standing at the top of the mountain above his house, a place of winds and pines and rusting shotgun cartridges. Far below are the pylons and arteries of the Valle di Chiana, and to the south of us, shadowed by cloud, is the darker plain of Lake Trasimene. In retrospect, says Hamilton-Paterson, it may seem peculiar that a man of forty-five who had spent a quarter of a century writing commercially in order to escape should have failed, until that moment, to see that fulfillment lay in the simple reverse—escaping in order to write—but that, he says with a shrug, is how our lives are made. "I see my late start as a privilege; I have half of a life to draw on."

James Hamilton-Paterson was four when the war ended and his father, a neurologist, entered his life. ("Quite suddenly, this demobbed stranger came into the house claiming to be my mother's husband. What intelligent child could believe a tale like that?") At seven Hamilton-Paterson was dispatched, miserable, to a South Coast preparatory school near Worthing. "There was, at that time, a kind of unintimacy amongst British middle-class professional people—parents almost withdrawing in advance so that the sending away of children at that age shouldn't be too damaging to either side."

The headmaster of the school was dying, and had lost control of the boys. There was ritualized bullying, and Hamilton-Paterson begged to be removed. His mother, an anesthetist, took his side, but his father was unimpressed. There were unspoken accusations of cowardice. "I definitely grew up feeling that I was not the son that my father wanted," remembers Hamilton-Paterson. "The yellow streak and so on. But then, my



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father was himself rather damaged goods, having been packed off alone from China to Southeast London. The whole of his school days had been spent living out of a suitcase with elderly relatives in the suburbs."

Hamilton-Paterson went on to Kings College, Canterbury, where he became the fag, or unofficial valet, of an aesthetically inclined senior. "He was suspected of being deeply perverted, although he never did anything sexual to me. It was, though, an intimate relationship; I put hot-water bottles in his bed, which was thought unspeakable. But he seemed very sophisticated amongst all those dim middle-class people. He had potpourri in his study, talked about Rimbaud, and so on. I inherited his somehow untouchable position, and was encouraged to write some dreadful and highly derivative poetry."

For a year after Canterbury, Hamilton-Paterson taught at "a completely mad prep school full of boys too thick to get into any other school. Some were *fifteen!*" He wondered vaguely about his future. As an accomplished musician who had taught himself to play the piano at the age of seven, he considered becoming a composer, but finally accepted a place to read modern languages at Oxford. During Hamilton-Paterson's first year at the university, his father died. After that, Hamilton-Paterson switched courses to English, began to write poetry in something approaching earnest, and came to the attention of Jonathan Wordsworth, the fellow in English at Exeter College.

"There was a set, centered around Jonathan and his wife Ann's house at Warborough. I have memories of a morass of small children, Bob Dylan records melting on the stove, people lying in the bath for hours marking examination papers, springer spaniels ambling about in a melancholy way and occasionally lapping from the lavatories." Hamilton-Paterson thought he had found a family in the Wordsworths, and he was very possessive of them. "I think it was a great distress to my mother," he says.

A year after the death of his father, Hamilton-Paterson recorded the event in a poem titled "Disease," which won him the Newdigate prize, 1964. At the awards ceremony, which he describes as a day of paralyzing tedium, he was seated between Robert Graves and Agatha Christie. "Of the two," he remembers, "Christie was by far the more interesting, although I've never been able to bear her writing." When, twenty-six years later, he was given the Whitbread First Novel Award for *Gerontius*, he found the experience no less irksome. "The do, the fuss, the shaking hands with Sam Whitbread, were all absolutely awful."

"Disease" was published in the Exeter College magazine along with work by Craig Raine, a student two years his junior. Raine, now probably England's most celebrated poet, was also a regular at Warborough, and remembers Hamilton-Paterson's writing well. "It was extraordinary, for undergraduate poetry. Much, much more sophisticated than the work the rest of us were doing."

"Of the two of us," allows Hamilton-Paterson, "Craig was by far the finer squash player." Their friendship has not endured.

Hamilton-Paterson applied himself to his academic studies as vigorously as was necessary to avoid actual expulsion, and continued to toy with a career in music. Eventually, feeling that he was more *pasticheur* than composer, he let the idea drop. "I'd decided that I didn't want to spend my life in organ lofts playing for services I didn't believe a word of."

In his last year at Oxford, in a typically career-destructive gesture, Hamilton-Paterson decided to leave and sign on as a cabin boy in the merchant navy, "as pathetic as that sounds. Jonathan talked me out of it. I stayed."

"James is like Byron," explains Jonathan Wordsworth, "in the importance he attaches to physical accomplishment." Wordsworth remembers that curiosity led Hamilton-Paterson to live on a diet of water for twenty-four days as part of a low-paid medical experiment. "I became weak," the author remembers, "and hungry. I was an unrewarding dinner guest. Otherwise nothing."

Later, in the Philippines, Hamilton-Paterson would "ride the rock"—jump overboard from a dinghy with a boulder in order to discover how deep he could be carried before being forced to let go. "I do not believe I ever went further than about 160 feet. There was something disagreeably inexorable about the downward tug." "His courage," says Mark Cousins, "terrifies me."

Dissuaded from the merchant navy, uninterested in parlaying his Newdigate prize into a career, Hamilton-Paterson decided to attend a teacher-training course at London University. "Disastrous, of course. I bailed out."

In 1965 he went to Libya for a year and taught English. He quickly began to

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live apart from the other British workers, learned kitchen Arabic, and stayed with the families of his students in the desert. It was a dangerous time, though. Nasser's broadcasts were inflaming the Arab world, and hostility toward Westerners was growing. Shortly before leaving the country, Hamilton-Paterson drove into the desert in his ten-year-old Ford Fairlane. Lying beneath some palm trees, reading, he looked up to find himself surrounded by six tribesmen. While one of their number sat with a rock poised over Hamilton-Paterson's head, the others took turns raping him. "It was extremely painful, and when they'd finished they spat on me, which I thought was a bit much. I took myself to an appalling, jovial Yugoslav doctor. 'No,' he said, 'you haff not been shplit!' "

It was time to leave. The next three years were spent at St. Stephen's Hospital in London, as a porter and operating-room technician. It was an attempt, suggests Hamilton-Paterson, to discover something of his parents' world.

"James," says Jonathan Wordsworth, "likes the *violence* of medicine."

"But it was the *unkindness* of the place which was a revelation," says Hamilton-Paterson. "Finally, though, I slipped in the snow while carrying a stomach over to the pathology lab. I suddenly had this vision of myself lying in London on the ground in snow and ice covered with somebody's stomach, thinking, This is very, very odd. What am I doing here?"

The answer, he now admits, was that he was temporizing. His life had become a series of starts and abandonments.

"James is not only fearful of becoming bored," explains Mark Cousins, "but he's also rather interested in ideas of leaving—of leaving places, leaving people. He has an ambivalence towards the idea of home. Which is not to say that he doesn't take pleasure in being welcomed into the bosom of a family—he does. Because if, as is the case with James, the act of leaving is the home of your perception, there does have to remain an image of what you're leaving."

On leaving St. Stephen's Hospital, Hamilton-Paterson became a journalist, traveling extensively in South America and Southeast Asia for *The New Statesman Society* and *The Sunday Times*. "As an investigative writer," remembers Tom Baistow, *The New Statesman*'s deputy editor at the time, "he was first-rate." In 1971, Hamilton-Paterson published *A Very Personal War*, an account of the attempts of Cornelius Hawkridge, an American security agent, to expose the financial corruption underpinning the Vietnam War. Although the book was not ignored, it was disbelieved, and in Hamilton-Paterson's later work for *The New Statesman* there is evidence of a certain weariness.

"It is a naïve bourgeois faith," he wrote in a review of *Body Count: Lieutenant Calley's Story* as told to John Sack, "that once a wrong has been exposed in the press it will automatically be righted and not allowed to recur; thus society improves. It is a lie, of course. Public knowledge is almost never enough because decisions are taken privately by an elite."

While one of the six tribesmen sat with a rock poised over Hamilton-Paterson's head, the others took turns raping him.

Hamilton-Paterson's last full-time association with journalism was in 1975, as features editor of *Nova*, a magazine, as he describes it, "for women with a perfectly decent second-class degree from Reading University."

Hamilton-Paterson has published two collections of poetry, *Option Three* in 1974 and *Dutch Alps* ten years later. Both were briefly praised; neither remains in print, although it is as a poet, Jonathan Wordsworth believes, that Hamilton-Paterson will eventually be remembered. Hamilton-Paterson still writes poetry. "The prose is for publication, the verse is for me."

Gerontius, published in 1989, is the fictional enlargement of a fact that Hamilton-Paterson had carried in his head for twenty years: in 1923, at the age of sixty-six, the composer Sir Edward Elgar traveled by steamship up the Amazon to Manaus. Hamilton-Paterson, in his journalist days, had also made the journey (he had also played the piano in Manaus's rose-painted opera house and occupied the city's jail as a seditionary). *Gerontius* is more an exploration of the themes of age, solitude, and creative power than a biographical fragment. The form of the book, as Andrew Harvey indicates, is that of the Elgarian symphony, but the book itself is not about Elgar.

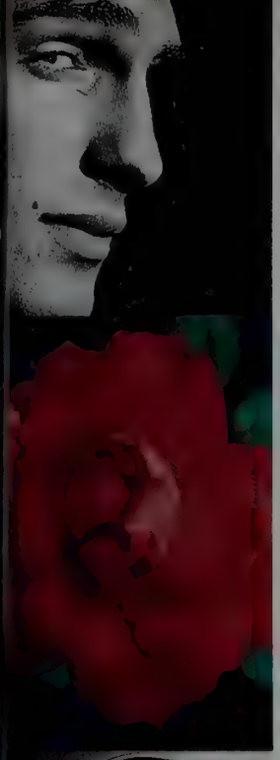
There were often no tunes, only this clamourous framework into which marvellous music might be fitted: an immanence of rhythm, a sense of paragraphs, blocks of feeling and a glimpse of a shape two blank pages ahead unmistakably in his hand but as yet unreadable. And ever since he could remember, a flow of water could also create this ache and expectancy, this melancholy engagement with everything of him which mattered. Here were no human faces, no loved voices, no thoughts.

It was in search of things "which mattered" that James Hamilton-Paterson first visited the Philippines, in 1979. Since then he has continued to spend a third of each year in the remote village he calls Kansulay. He speaks serviceable Tagalog, and although the hut where he lives and works stands some distance from the others, he has many friends. He lives simply, spears his own fish, and leaves little sign of his presence; termites and the weather ensure that the hut has to be renewed each season. Tiwarik is no more, or at least is no longer recognizable. The island of streaming grasses is now "the Fantasy Elephant Club," a Japanese middle-management bordello. The lost object, found, is lost again.

Hamilton-Paterson will continue to divide his time between Italy and the Philippines. He is cured, he says, of newer, wilder horizons; by way of oblique explanation, he refers me to the work of the Victorian watercolorist Marianne North, who traveled the world recording tropical flora and exotic landscape. Is there not some curious way, asks Hamilton-Paterson, in which all of North's stereotypical vistas, from Java to Jamaica, have ended up looking like the South Downs of East Sussex? It is the anthropologist, he explains, who finds something new on every voyage. What the traveler finds is always the same.

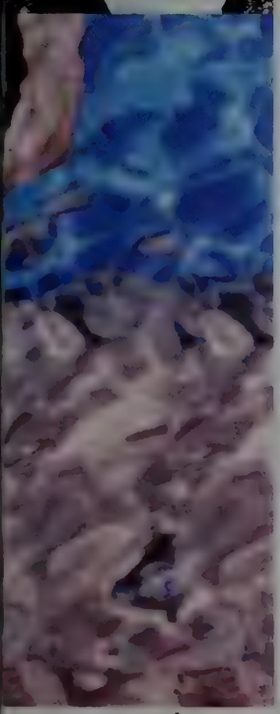
We are standing with our backs to the house and the mountain. In the small stone room behind us is a rectangular table salvaged from a bar, and on the table are a typewriter and the handwritten manuscript of a third novel, as yet unnamed. The light from the window is directed onto the table by an arrangement of mirrors; in five minutes the light will strike the keys of the typewriter and Hamilton-Paterson will begin the work of transcribing the novel. For the moment, though, he sets his face to the wind. □


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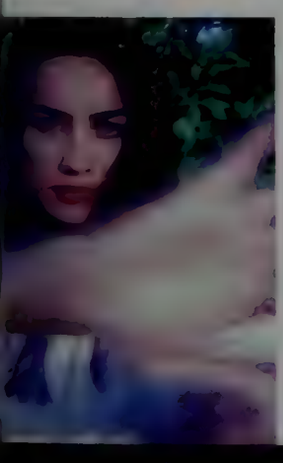


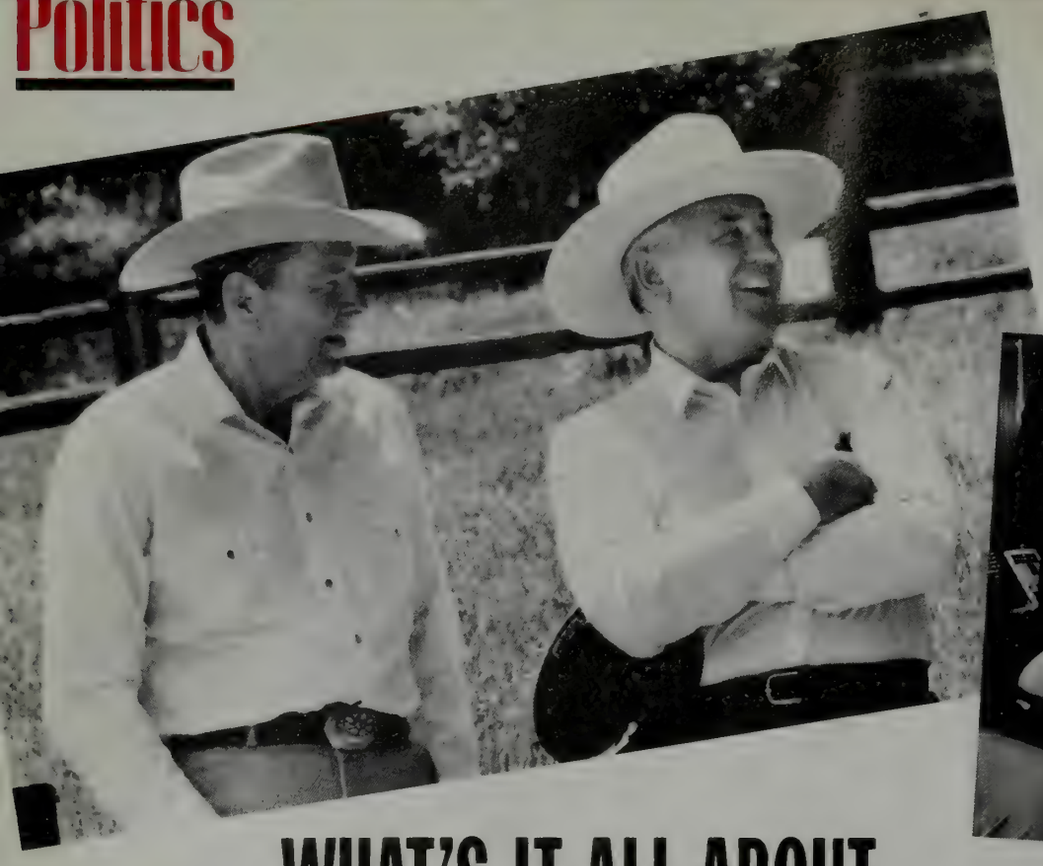
casual. what else would you expect from the left coast?

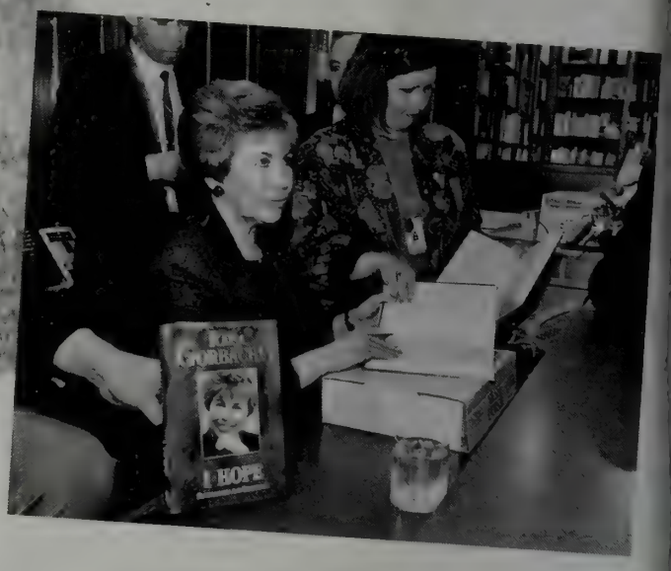
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Going west: Gorbachev on the Reagan ranch during his fund-raising tour. *Below,* Raisa signs copies of her book, *I Hope,* in New York.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT, GORBY?

How Mikhail Gorbachev, the man who changed the world, is now scrambling to salvage his place in history

BY DAVID REMNICK

Bloated and depressed, Nikita Khrushchev spent his last days alone in the woods, mumbling his life story into a tape recorder. "What kind of shit is that when you have to keep people in chains?" he raged to the machine. "If God had given me the chance to continue, I would have thrown the doors and windows wide open." But now, the old man said, "my time has passed and I am very tired. I am at the age when I have nothing before me but the past."

The moment Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, he began telling his closest advisers that he wanted to continue where Khrushchev had left off, to open the doors and windows. And he was obsessed, too, with Khrushchev's failure, the way a string of vanities and mistakes had led to a pathetic demise: the palace coup of 1964, the years of obscurity, the secret funeral under K.G.B. guard. This spring, the last general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party toured the United States in the Forbes corporate jet, *Capitalist Tool*. He saw nothing odd or ironic in this. The crowds tossed garlands at his feet; plutocrats deposited checks in his name. He spent an afternoon with Ronald Reagan drinking wine and eating cookies. They reminisced about the Cold War, long over. It seemed to all the victory tour of the century's last great man.

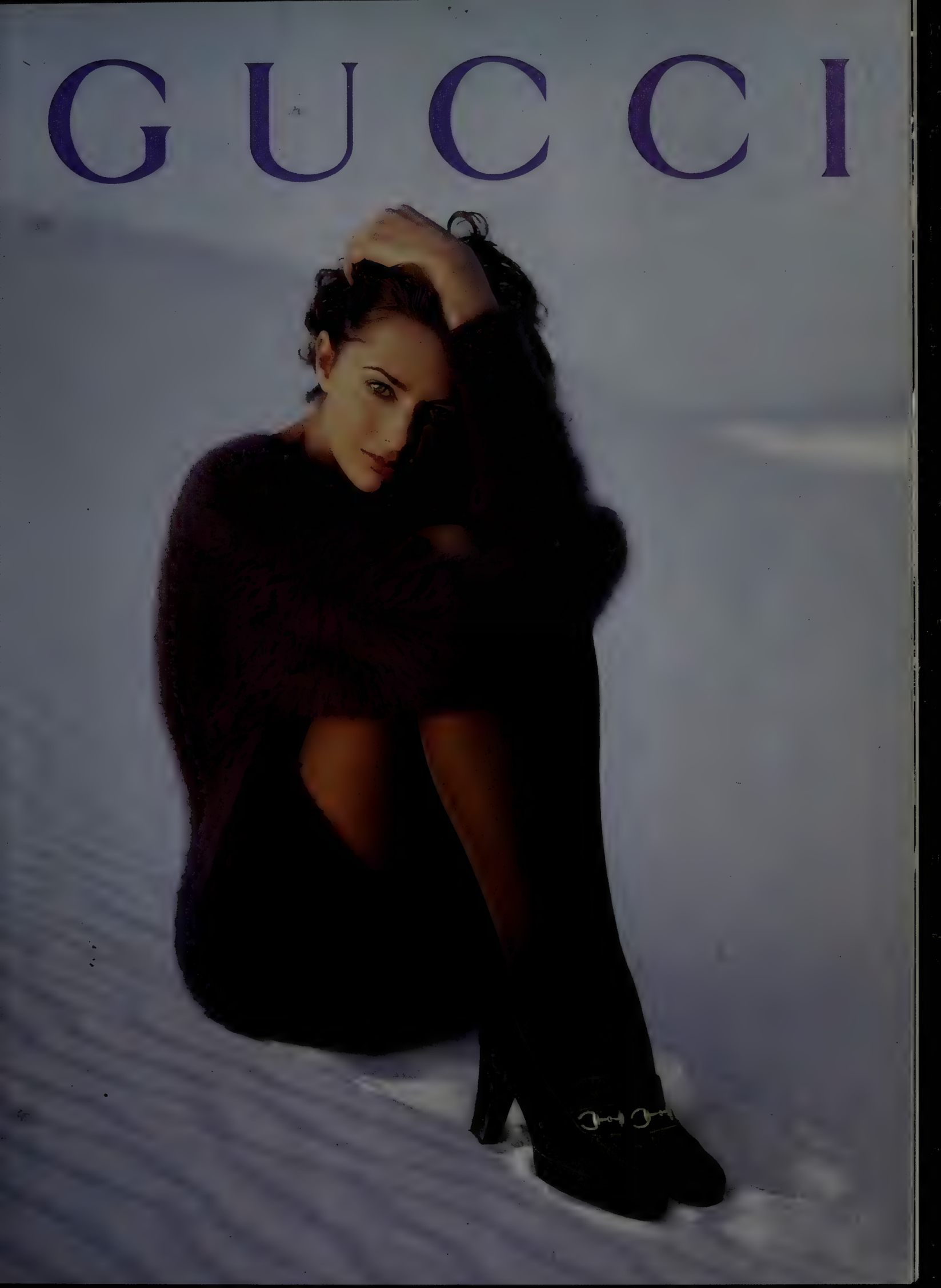
But like Khrushchev before him, Gorbachev now sits at home in a government-issue dacha gnawing on the hard bone of regret. Nothing went as he had envisioned it. When Gorbachev opened the doors on the system he ruled, the entire edifice collapsed in a heap. He was like the man in the old Russian joke: After a terrible earthquake, nothing is left standing in a city except a single bathroom. The police arrive and discover a man inside sitting nervously on the toilet. "It's not my fault!" he cries. "All I did was flush!" And so with Mikhail Sergeyevich. The party he wanted to reform, "the initiator of perestroika," was shut down and may soon be put on trial; the union he sought to preserve is shattered (at last count) into fifteen pieces; "the ideals of Lenin" he wanted to revive now seem as distant and obscure as the faith of the Aztecs. All because he tinkered with Utopia.

Although Gorbachev has been celebrated more than any statesman since Churchill, he is bitter. At the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, Gorbachev was willing to let the raw wound show. The democrats, having fended off the coup, dumped him for the sake of "Kremlin ambitions," he said. Yeltsin "used the ax and the whip" to bring down the party. And now, he said later in Moscow, with society "on the edge of breakdown, they need to find a lightning rod. O.K., we'll find one. We'll tie Gorbachev to the stake of history. This is how I view the past: in order to seize power, to smash the center, they smashed the union too. What next?"

The old lion rages on, explaining, justifying, reshaping the narrative of his

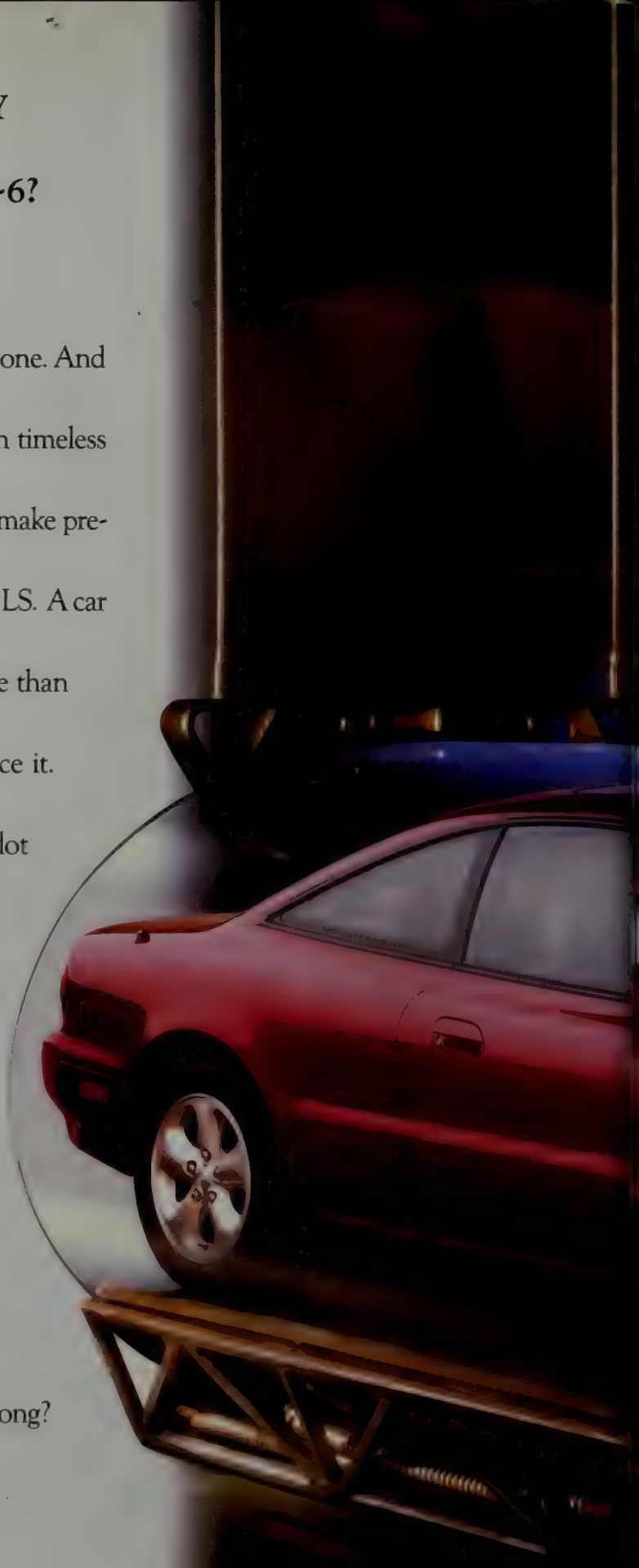
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epic career. But at home, no one listens. Gorbachev is an unwanted man in Russia, despised by the party men he betrayed, and ignored by the democrats he abandoned. Many are ready to think the worst of him. *Izvestia*, the most authoritative daily in Russia, published a front-page item in May saying that Gorbachev was getting ready to walk out the very doors he had opened. The first and last true president of the Soviet Union, *Izvestia* said, had bought a two-story house in Florida "with a lot of land" for $108,350 in a development called "Tropical Golf Acres." Of course, people said knowingly. Of course.

In fact, Gorbachev has not bought land abroad and denies any plans to emigrate. "I repeat, for anyone who is still willing to listen," he said, "I have no dacha in California, or in Geneva, or in Tibet with tunnels leading to China." Some of Gorbachev's confidants admit that he is angry and on edge, harboring both terror and illusions about his future. "Gorbachev fears he may have to flee the country one day like some kind of Papa Doc Duvalier," says Mikhail Shatrov, a playwright who is helping Gorbachev write his memoirs. "He knows only too well that eleven of the fourteen coup plotters have testified against him, claiming he somehow encouraged the August putsch. Gorbachev knows the situation is unpredictable. At the same time, Gorbachev has delusions of returning to power. Not right away, but someday. But it won't happen. He cannot return to power."

Just before he resigned last Christmas night, Gorbachev held a series of talks with the man who had engaged him in Moscow's greatest ego-power struggle since the days of Stalin and Trotsky. The battle with Yeltsin was finally over, and promises were made—or hinted at. Gorbachev made it clear he would not try to form an opposition. He was out of politics now and would limit himself to chairing a benign foundation. He would become a Jimmy Carter figure, worthy and marginal—a half-public man.

There was no other choice. "Yeltsin had Gorbachev by the balls," says Sergei Grigoriev, who was once deputy spokesman for Gorbachev. K.G.B., Communist Party, and military archives are now in Yeltsin's hands. We may never see all of them—K.G.B. officials have told me that in the days before and after the coup secret-police workers were dumping crates of documents into underground furnaces—but the few files that have leaked can only have embarrassed Gorbachev. There are documents showing Gorbachev's approval of secret funding of the Polish Communist Party even after Solidarity came to power. Another file shows him maneuvering to prevent the German government from opening the old East German archives. Sources say that Yeltsin has also come into possession of transcripts of his own phone calls from the days when the Gorbachev government and the K.G.B. were trying desperately to discredit him. Gorbachev's handwritten notes are in the margins, the sources say.

Moreover, few believe anymore that Gorbachev was ever an innocent bystander during the worst moments of the perestroika years: the military attacks on peaceful demonstrators in Tbilisi, Vilnius, Riga, and Baku. When Gorbachev was in power, he was constantly dodging blame. He could always say he was out of the country or out of the loop, and the hard-liners took the fall. But now even those close to Gorbachev admit otherwise. "I am sure Gorbachev knew all about what was going on in Vilnius and Riga," says Nikolai Petrakov, who was Gorbachev's chief economist. "Don't be naïve."

Gorbachev is an unwanted man, despised by the party men he betrayed, and ignored by the democrats he abandoned.

Yeltsin has relished the demise of his old rival. He gave Gorbachev the last shove from power even earlier than agreed upon. Two days before the scheduled transition, Gorbachev showed up at his office at the Kremlin only to find that his nameplate had been pried off the wall. Yeltsin was in the presidential chair. "Mikhail Sergeyevich had to move elsewhere," says Gorbachev's aide and translator, Pavel Palazhchenko. "It was an extremely uncomfortable moment." Comeuppance was what it was. In 1987, Gorbachev dragged Yeltsin from a hospital bed and made him stand before the Moscow city party organization for hour after hour of denunciation that evoked memories of the Stalin years. Yeltsin spent the next several weeks under a doctor's care, suffering from nervous exhaustion. When given the chance to humiliate Gorbachev, he grabbed it.

Gorbachev's new base of operations is in a plush building in northern Moscow that was once known as "the School with No Name." Foreign Communists from nonsocialist countries used to come to the institute to learn their ideological catechism. The institute is now a scaled-down version of Gorbachev's old headquarters at the Central Committee. The resemblance is spooky. The offices are spare and bleached, and the same faces wander the halls, noiselessly: Aleksandr Yakovlev, Giorgi Shakhnazarov, Vadim Medvedev, Grigori Revenko, Pavel Palazhchenko. They are the last loyalists, that part of the inner circle that did not conspire in the August coup.

"It's as if his life has not changed," Grigoriev says. "The foreigners still come and go on. Gorbachev still lives in the same old closed world in which all the feedback is from the same people. As a result, he really never realized how unpopular he had become. As late as last October or November, Gorbachev and Raisa told Arkady Volsky [an old friend from the Central Committee], 'The people still love us.' Gorbachev should have expected his own fall from power, but he never saw it coming until the end. For days he expected a popular reaction on his behalf; he even expected help from the Americans."

Gorbachev's foundation means to do good works: organize student exchanges, bring together panels of scholars, develop model clinics to improve health care in Moscow. At the same time, Gorbachev has made no secret of his desire to make some money for himself. He is feeling strapped. In an interview with French television, Raisa complained from the backseat of a chauffeur-driven car about the family pension; in the Russian press, Gorbachev said it was no longer possible to live in Moscow without hard currency. In Moscow, these statements played roughly as well as Nancy Reagan's complaints about the White House china did in Washington.

Gorbachev seems open to anything now. For a sequel to Wim Wenders's film *Wings of Desire*, he played himself, wandering around a soundstage improvising a soliloquy on Dostoyevsky and the state of the world. For $520,000, Gorbachev sold the world television

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rights to his life story to an independent British company, Directors International, promising interviews, archives, and other access for a four-part series. Gorbachev even said he would try to coax Reagan and Margaret Thatcher to participate. As with all these projects, it is unclear how much Gorbachev will keep for himself. The producer, John Cairns, said, "It's up to him how much he pays himself, but his main priority seems to be the Gorbachev Foundation."

Then there is the main source of capital for fallen kings: memoirs. At Stanford University, Gorbachev said that he is often asked about his motives for beginning the reform of the Soviet Union, but he wasn't about to give a full answer. Not here. He was writing his memoirs, "and I hope you will spend some dollars and buy them." The crowd laughed, though Gorbachev did not seem to understand what was funny. He is talking about a total of eight volumes, including a book scheduled for the end of the year on his last days in office. But publishers are losing some of their enthusiasm.

His recent book, *The August Coup*, reportedly cost HarperCollins $500,000 for world rights, and, while it turned a profit, the book was a feeble exercise in self-justification and warmed-over press-conference answers. Although Mikhail Shatrov has sent Gorbachev by fax a weekly list of questions to prod him along in the preparation of new volumes—"What was your relationship with the K.G.B.?" "What did it feel like to have to flatter Brezhnev?"—it would be unwise to expect Augustinian confessions from such a guarded personality.

Russian liberals have reacted to Gorbachev's talents as a global "biznisman" with little more than an ironic smile. After all, the market is supposed to be open for anyone—even the fallen czar. But the party hard-liners and empire-lovers will never forgive him. Just before the coup, the K.G.B. chief, Vladimir Kryuchkov, accused Gorbachev of carrying out policies that were in perfect sync with the fondest hopes of the C.I.A. Kryuchkov is now in jail, but the attack continues. "Those who betrayed the Communist idea and the party have now privatized the party's property," the conservative paper *Sovetskaya Rossiya* moaned. "Those who are responsible for this country's catastrophe and who smeared the word 'Communist' are now making a cozy nest for themselves at the expense of ordinary people."

Gorbachev was furious. " 'Yesterday's men' are a vengeful breed," he said in a long interview with *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. "Before, they tried to steer us away from the democratic path, and now they are after me personally. Well, to hell with them! What am I supposed to be afraid of? The firing squad? The courts? I am not going to tolerate accusations coming from people who have spent too much of their time believing in the slogans of the thirties."

"Yeltsin had Gorbachev by the balls," says Sergei Grigoriev, who was deputy spokesman for Gorbachev.

When asked about foreign bank accounts, Gorbachev threw up his hands in exasperated offense: "So that's how it is! Through your newspaper, with its huge circulation, I appeal to all bankers of the world. I give you permission to make available to the press information about my foreign investments—specific sums and data. Go ahead, publish it! This is just an extreme method of proving that I have no such thing, although that of course is nothing to be proud of! But the rumors that Gorbachev wants to go abroad and stay there to live on his savings have passed all permissible bounds. . . . They can stop hoping. Although many people would like me not to come back, I'm not running away."

Gorbachev left for California on the first May Day after the fall of the Communist Party. A day later, *Capitalist Tool* landed on an airstrip in Santa Barbara. It was strange to me to see Gorbachev in such reduced circumstances, at an event destined for the back pages. The last time I'd watched him come down the steps of a plane, it was August a year ago, and he was returning to Moscow after the coup. Back then, he was tanned and wearing the beige windbreaker of a man trying to relax, but he was obviously stricken, stunned, and exhausted, and Raisa, her arm around her granddaughter, looked worse. Gorbachev had "looked death in the face" when he was under siege, he said. Raisa was so sure that the entire family would be killed that she suffered a seizure that left her, for days, without the use of one hand. Gorbachev made a terrible mistake that night—the first of a series. He told his driver to take him to the Kremlin. He should have gone instead to the Russian parliament, "the White House," where the people who had really saved the country months, even years of neo-despotism with their resistance to the putsch were setting off fireworks and playing "Hotel California" on imported boom boxes. Mistakes like that led Gorbachev to Santa Barbara, to this jerkwater airport, for the start of a two-week exercise in reputation restoration and nostalgia.

Dutch was there, of course, looking fabulous. Reagan still had that high-extension wave and crinkly father-of-the-bride smile going for him. The hangar was filled with his people, Hollywood types and corporate deacons who had made their fortunes buying up oil leases and huge plots of land. They lived plummy lives in the hills of Montecito. Two hours away, the embers were still hot in South-Central and Koreatown, and some pilots wouldn't land at LAX for fear of gunfire. But the riots in Los Angeles were as distant from Santa Barbara as the war in Nagorno-Karabakh. "We love you, Ron!" "Gorby! Gorby!" came the cries from the proles along the storm fence.

The next afternoon at Rancho del Cielo, the Reagans' spread in the Santa Barbara hills, the Gorbachevs were the new, dowdy neighbors dropping by for lunch and the grand tour. They walked around the grounds in the hard sunlight, chattering, meaning to be overheard by the press pool. Gorbachev was quick to praise. He went on about the greenery, how it looked like the landscape of his youth. Nancy and Raisa held hands, almost fiercely, the better to erase the image of them as catfighters on an epic scale. It was Nancy who had turned in fury to an aide at the White House and said, "Who does that dame think she is?" Now Raisa, having overdressed in a furry outfit and heels, suffered. She kept sinking into the California turf.

"I want you to know that Ronny built all these fences," Nancy said. Everyone quietly surveyed the fences. The press packet solemnly stated that the fortieth president had made the fences by hacking up 137 used telephone poles.

That's the way it went, dull and stiff, like new in-laws trying hard to be pleasant before the wedding. Nancy showed off her binoculars and assured everyone that she could see the craters of the

moon with them. Gorbachev asked about the trees, and Reagan described how one of his friends had brought the seedlings in from Mexico. Dutch showed off a picture of Clark Gable. Raisa pointed to a barrel of geraniums and pronounced them her "favorites." The men talked about the difference between acres and hectares and real-estate prices in California and Moscow.

("Can we go yet?")

("Will they ever leave?")

Like so much in his life, Reagan's spread was more like a Hollywood back lot than an actual ranch. There were the four horses and Nancy's donkey, Wendy, who wore a red bow in her hair. There was Lucky Lake, the man-made lagoon with green, recirculated water that seemed more green than reality allows. And there was the fifteen-foot canoe, the *Trulove*. On the occasion of the Reagans' fortieth wedding anniversary, Nancy declared that there was nothing so romantic as cruising Lucky Lake in the *Trulove* with Ronny up front playing the ukulele. Today, she told the Gorbachevs, "we don't have a ukulele, but we can hum." When the chatter was over and everyone had posed for a picture in cowboy hats, Reagan drove Gorbachev in his Jeep through the woods and out of sight.

Everywhere he went, Gorbachev was reminded of his statelessness. At the Reagan Library in Simi Valley, among the hard-core right, the white-stockings-and-Ray-Bans crowd, the air-force band played "God Bless America," "God Bless the U.S.A.," "America," and "The Star-Spangled Banner." What could they play for Gorbachev? "Lara's Theme"?

In one city after another, they clubbed him over the head with the triumph of capitalism: at the Mercantile Exchange in Chicago, at the stock exchange in New York, with David Rockefeller at the Council on Foreign Relations, at the Harvest Burgers plant in Illinois. At Radio City Music Hall he was subjected to a Forbes-produced film on the victories of capitalism. In Fulton, Missouri, a sun-burnished frat boy with a "#1 Spud" necktie said, "My teacher says Gorby's a total butthead, but we think he's cool."

In San Francisco and Palo Alto especially, Gorbachev heard the feeble chirp of residual leftism: "I want to fight for that international revolution that Trotsky and Lenin first spoke of," one man said. Some Stanford boys in prepster outfits traipsed through the crowd carrying a banner: MAO MORE THAN EVER. Gorbachev found them all foolish, but answered in the earnest tones of a party instructor who had to inform his students that all the dialectics had gone haywire. "The last totalitarian regimes on earth are leaving the scene," he told the Marxists of California. "Policies of equalization are not really just. They suppress initiative and social energy."

The trip was a two-week-long hallucination of history. There was Gorbachev, the inheritor of Lenin, pitching his foundation, collecting fees and awards, hoping to pull in $3 million. In San Francisco, he was into a joint venture with the "environmental-impressionist" artist George Sumner. You could buy a print signed by Sumner alone for $1,500, or, for $5,000, one "historically signed" by both Sumner and Gorbachev ($500 extra for a frame with "black lacquer molding").

He loved it all, Gorbachev did. He relished the unending admiration of the American audiences and press, the legislators and students and businessmen who waited hours to see him. It was a strange America Gorbachev saw, wealth and little else, but all the same he seemed to bask in Americanness, like Humbert Humbert on his own, illicit tour, savoring the supple names of motels, convenience stores, and schoolchildren. "We love Gorby!" they cried out, and, by God, he was grateful for it.

Yeltsin has relished his rival's demise. He gave Gorbachev the last shove from power even earlier than agreed upon.

When Gorbachev arrived home and reviewed his clippings, he was stunned. The Russian papers either ignored the trip or poked fun at him. Some papers relegated the trip to a squib on a back page—the sort of play Gerald Ford gets when he beans a caddie at a pro-am tournament. Others tried to ram some bile down his throat. "In his own Motherland, this man beats all records of unpopularity and antipathy," wrote *Izvestia*'s Stanislav Kondrashov. "The initiator of perestroika bowed low to the dollar. . . . For the first time, a top state leader—even though he is a former leader—went abroad like an itinerant serf in search of hard currency."

Enraged, Gorbachev quickly launched into a fit with a reporter from *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. "Am I allowed to ask a question?" he barked. "Everything that was said about this trip looked like this: While Gorbachev travels around in a cowboy hat raising millions for himself and buying mansions, the country and the people are in trouble. But how can you explain that America showed such tremendous interest in what I said and the answers I gave to all questions?

"For two weeks, the American press was all over me. I even had to give interviews in elevators. Congressmen even saw Gorbachev while they were standing. Something is wrong here. It can't be like this! They are interested, and we are not interested at all. I can add something else: the Russian government went to great lengths to exert a negative influence as regards my visit, on Congress and the White House."

It was true. Yeltsin complained that Gorbachev had broken his promise, that he was acting like a politician. Yeltsin's aides tried hard to get both Congress and the White House to play down the Gorbachev trip, to make sure the event did nothing to detract from their own man's journey to Washington. Gorbachev, for his part, said he supported the Yeltsin program but saw no reason not to criticize tactics.

"Listen, Yeltsin is not Jesus Christ. He is not the sort of person to whom I should be accountable!" he said, adding that Yeltsin's government had shown "authoritarian tendencies." "The new powers know how to destroy, yet they haven't proved they can also create something. The government needs to attract all forces, and yet it doesn't even think it necessary to take advice. We take the initiative to speak out, but it is seen as interference. To me, this is unacceptable. . . . They want me to keep my mouth shut. Well, I have said it already: I am not running off to the woods. I am not leaving public life."

Yeltsin's response was chilling. His spokesman accused Gorbachev of sowing "political tension" and warned that unless Gorbachev showed proper "restraint" and "loyalty" the government would be obliged to take "necessary and legal steps to ensure that the

course of reform will not be damaged." In the meantime, Yeltsin took away Gorbachev's limousine.

If Gorbachev is engaged in a struggle now, it is, above all, a struggle for his historical reputation. "Everything that he was going to do, he has done already," says Yuri Levada, a sociologist and one of Gorbachev's close friends from university days.

Gorbachev did not want to retire. He would have preferred to remain president of a new federation of the republics. But the conspirators did succeed in one thing. Through their failure, the leaders of the republics suddenly had the power to push Gorbachev aside. And now Yeltsin is the man of sterling reputation.

"Gorbachev is jealous of Yeltsin," says Sergei Parkhomenko, the lead political reporter for *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (The Independent Newspaper). "Gorbachev thinks that it's all so easy for Yeltsin because Yeltsin can afford to make these political reforms."

Some of the best minds in the urban intelligentsia—the constituency that Gorbachev courted and ultimately lost—now regard their former leader with a certain air of superiority. "His speech is that of an uncultured man. He whips the air," says Leonid Batkin, one of the leaders of the Democratic Russia movement. "Yet he is an outstanding man in his way, a great apparatchik. After Stalin, Gorbachev was the most skillful of all the apparatchiks. But when the time came for a real politician, Gorbachev did one stupid thing after another."

Natalia Ivanova, a literary critic, compares Gorbachev "to the man who gave the orders to begin the fateful experiment at Chernobyl. He wanted to refine the machine, but the machine went out of control and exploded."

And Viktor Yerofeyev, a well-known novelist in Moscow, says that Gorbachev was "like Valentina Tereshkova, the first female cosmonaut. She fainted right away and was dangling in orbit but still managed to press the right buttons at the right time just because she was dangling in the exact right place. She took off, she dangled, and she didn't die. That was her triumph. The same with Gorbachev. Gorbachev pressed the buttons he needed to, and the combination of wrong and right buttons turned out to be just right. That created a metaphysical figure—a divine provident for Russia. Gorbachev guided Russia to its historical fate. He has entered the pantheon of Russian history, and gradually he'll come to be seen as that great figure. But not soon. Russians are an ungrateful people."

Even Gorbachev's most dispassionate critics miss the point of what he was and who he was (and the past is the right tense for it). Gorbachev was not Andrei Sakharov. He was not a moral prophet or an intellectual giant. He was not even a man of exceptional goodness.

Today, Nancy Reagan told the Gorbachevs, "we don't have a ukulele, but we can hum."

Gorbachev was, above all, a politician. He combined a rough sense of morality with a preternatural ability to manipulate a system that had seemed, from the outside, unbendable. If, in the language of the Greek fable, Sakharov was the hedgehog, a man with a fixed sense of politics and morality, then Gorbachev was the fox, a man capable of both deceit and decency, consistent values and infuriating dogma, but a genius at a nasty game. An irreplaceable man.

At the Council on Foreign Relations, I got a little taste of that gift for manipulation. It was the sort of move that I had been watching and hearing about for years from my reporter's distance. Just before Gorbachev's speech, Palazhchenko turned to him and said, "Mikhail Sergeyevich, this is David Remnick. He was in Moscow for *The Washington Post* for four years." "Of course," Gorbachev said. "I already recognized him."

A full hour later, at some rather meaningless point in his speech, Gorbachev looked at me and said, "Isn't that right, David?" Pure mashed-potato-circuit hokum. But the man knew what to do—how to flatter and work the room.

With thousands of gestures like that one, Gorbachev rose through the ranks of the Communist Party. To take power as general secretary, he had to make sure the troglodytes of the politburo and Central Committee did not feel threatened. "We never knew there would be anything like perestroika," says Gaidar Aliyev, one of the politburo conservatives, who soon found himself fired. "We thought he'd modernize, improve things. But that wasn't all there was, right?"

Until June 1989, when he presided over the first elected legislature of the Soviet Union, Gorbachev chipped away at the totalitarian monolith. But from there, his personal story became tragic. He was dragged along by events and never seemed able to decide how to maneuver from one day to the next. "Watershed moments in history are not particularly pleasant to live through," Gorbachev said at Stanford with a trace of self-pity. "Before you stands a man who has been through a lot."

There in Palo Alto, Paradise's university town, Gorbachev delivered a speech that echoed the moment in November 1987 when perestroika really began in earnest. It was the seventieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, and Gorbachev used the occasion to declare the crimes of the Stalin era "unforgivable." The conservatives of the party would not permit a full analysis of the regime's brutal history, and Gorbachev had to be content at the time with hints.

But now, in California and out of power, Gorbachev wanted us to feel as though he had always been a democrat, a liberal, in his heart. Instead of quoting Lenin endlessly, he referred to Tocqueville and Jefferson, and the Russian liberal thinkers Solovyov and Berdyaev. He even thanked the dissidents for their "contribution to the intelligentsia and even parts of the party apparatus."

"Politics is the art of the possible," he said. "Any other approach would be voluntarism. . . . There were failures, mistakes, and illusions, but the task was to unfetter the democratic process. . . . I tried to use tactical means to gain time, to give the democratic movement a chance to get stronger. As president, I had powers, including emergency powers, that people tried to push me into using more than once. I simply could not betray myself."

It was as if Gorbachev were talking to himself, trying to convince himself that he was a moral, as well as a political, genius. But he was no saint. He was heroic, flawed, and tragic—and that is a much more complicated matter. "Gorbachev is a man of incredible vanity," says Sergei Parkhomenko. "He longs to be in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. His main misfortune was that he could not attend the Nobel Prize ceremonies. He wanted so badly to stand next to Norwegian royalty and join the club of great men. But remember: this desire to be great helped him accomplish many things." □


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Where style meets substance

Hello, Polly!

Polly Walker—of the milkmaid complexion and odalisque eyes—slithers into international attention this summer with creamy self-containment. As the most decorative contributor to the body count of Patriot Games, *she shoots to kill in black lingerie without shedding a flicker of her lunar serenity. And in* Enchanted April, *she brings a subtle jazz-baby restiveness to her eternally poised aristocrat. Formerly with the Royal Shakespeare Company, she is just back from location in Prague with Anthony Hopkins, where she doubtless brought a comparably efficient coolness to the impenetrable Kafka-spun mysteries of Harold Pinter's adaptation of* The Trial.

—BEN BRANTLEY

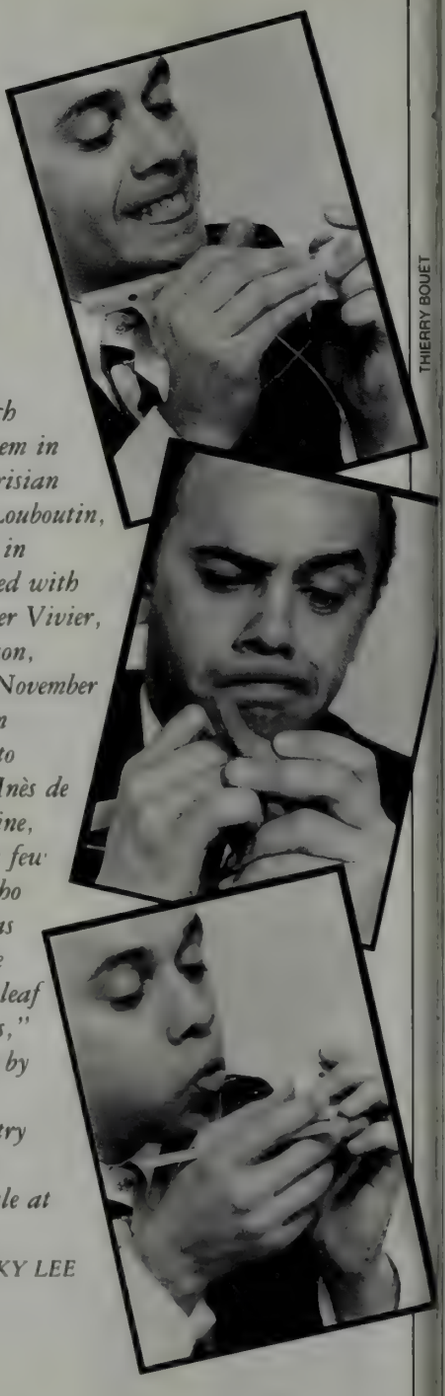


Photograph by JOHN STODDART



A shoe-in: Louboutin wrestling with the creative force at his Paris atelier.

Pump It Up



THIERRY BOUET

"I love shoes, but not so much that I'd put frescoes of them in my apartment," says Parisian shoe designer Christian Louboutin, who studied landscaping in college and has apprenticed with not only his mentor, Roger Vivier, but also Chanel, Maud Frizon, and Charles Jourdan. Last November he opened his own boutique in Paris's Galerie Véro-Dodat to showcase his first collection. Inès de la Fressange, Princess Caroline, and Lee Radziwill are but a few of the globe-trotting swells who have collected such creations as "Les Bois Dorés," handmade shoes with antique-like gold-leaf wooden heels, and "Lovebirds," a pair that when placed side by side spell out LOVE. *American shoe fetishists can try on his fancy foot works come September when they go on sale at Barneys New York and Bergdorf Goodman.* —RICKY LEE

Clothes Encounter

The fashion cognoscenti pursed their Chanel-lipsticked lips when Yves Saint Laurent chairman Pierre Bergé announced plans to back the debut collection of Robert Merloz. A first-time collaboration for the couturier, but not a surprising one considering that Merloz, twenty-six, is a former student at Paris's Chambre Syndicale school of haute couture and has designed the YSL fur line since 1989. What was *choquant* was that he planned to show his spring '93 ready-to-wear line during July couture week. "I wanted to show during a time that was more calm," says Merloz, who will say only that his clothes "are for poetic young women." —R.L.

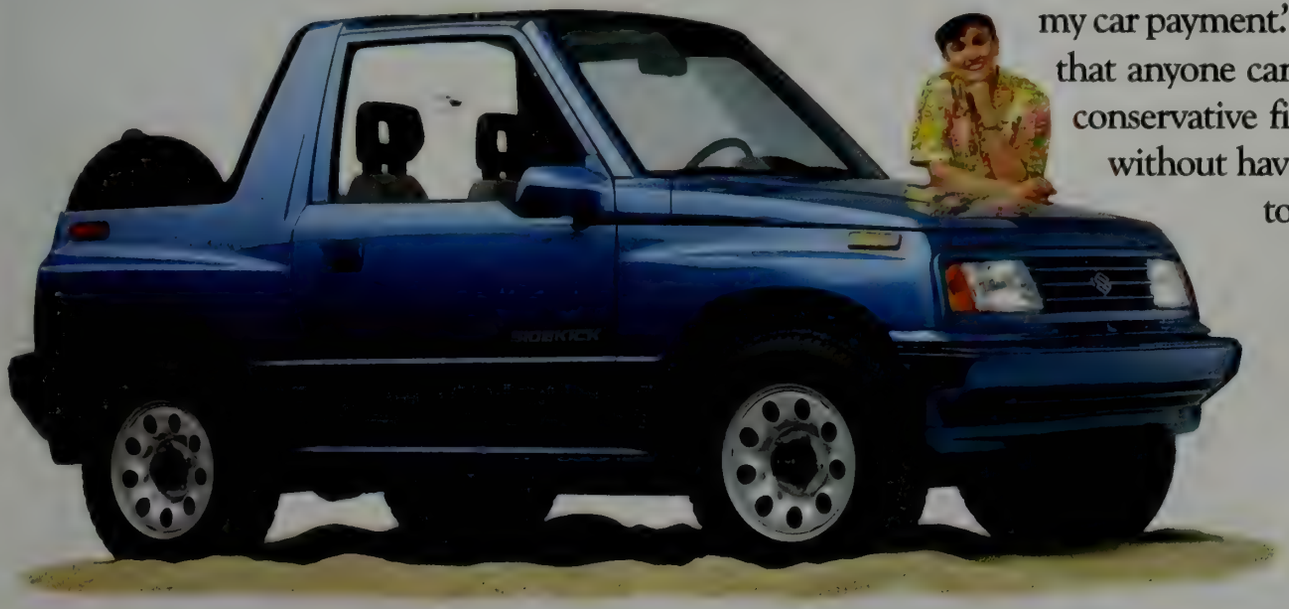


JOHN VAN HASSELLS

Ready-to-pair: Merloz and YSL.

"My very conservative relatives scratch their heads and wonder why I traded my Acura for it." After much test driving "and soul searching," Debbie Riggins of Longwood, Florida, traded her Integra for a 1989 Suzuki Sidekick. She hasn't looked back since. It's dependable, gets great mileage, and is a gas to drive, even from Florida to Virginia (where the relatives in question happen to live). She loves it, and she's not alone. "My roommate owns an expensive German sports sedan, and always looks for excuses to borrow my Sidekick." Plus there's an added benefit: "I also wanted to lower my car payment." Proving that anyone can be very conservative financially without having to be totally dull.





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Clockwise from left: *Sugar Rautbord; Dino with Jerry, Marilyn, and Milton in the fifties; Joseph Mitchell in New York City.*

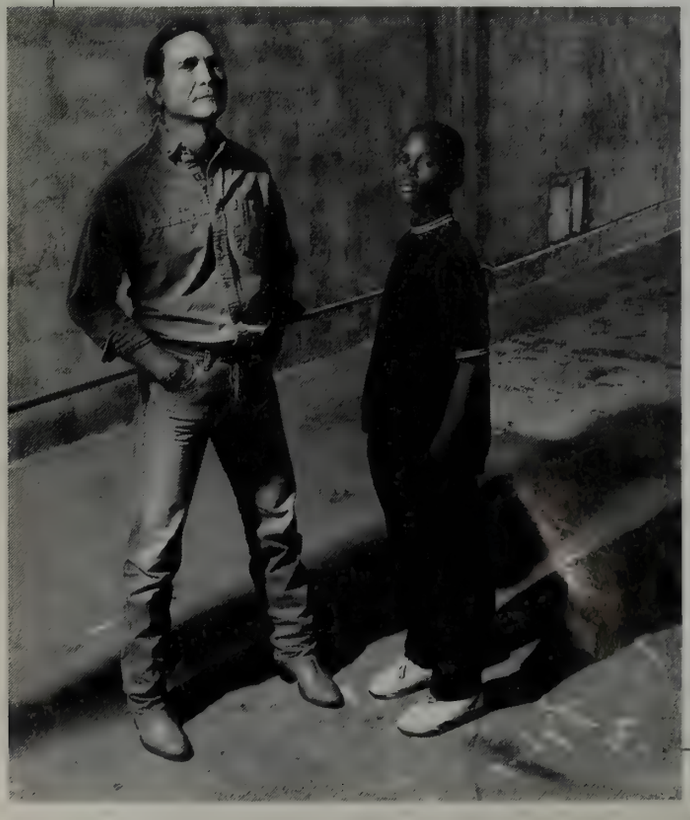
Hot Type

A *V.F.* pick of summer beach reads

Nick Tosches takes a shot at the Rat Pack days and nights of heartthrob crooner Dean Martin in a new biography, *Dino* (Doubleday). *After Moondog* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), **Jane Shapiro's** first novel, is a stunning study of a modern marriage. Russian playwright **Edvard Radzinsky** unearths new clues in the mystery behind the execution of the Romanovs in *The Last Tsar* (Doubleday). **Josephine Hart** follows up last year's fiction sizzler *Damage* with a twisted tale of sibling rivalry in *Sin* (Knopf). **Joseph Mitchell's** quintessential portraits of New York City, published from 1938 to 1965 in *The New Yorker,* are collected in *Up in the Old Hotel* (Pantheon). Novelist **Beverly Lowry** reflects on the coincidence of the death of her son and two murders in Texas in *Crossed Over* (Knopf). *The Reporter Who Would Be King* (Scribner's), by **Arthur Lubow,** is a biography of swashbuckling journalist and Hemingway guru Richard Harding Davis. *Sweet Revenge* (Villard), a.k.a. "Barbarians Under the Bed," is the new novel by Chicago sensation **Sugar Rautbord. Peter Canby** explores the life and legacy of the Maya in *The Heart of the Sky* (HarperCollins). **Richard Ben Cramer** delivers a postmortem on the 1988 presidential campaign in *What It Takes* (Random House). **John R. MacArthur** attacks press coverage of the Persian Gulf War in *Second Front* (Hill and Wang). Pulitzer Prize winner **Neil Sheehan** revisits Vietnam in *After the War Was Over* (Random House). **Linda Svendsen's** debut novel, *Marine Life* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux), examines the private horrors of a working-class family.



DARRYL ESTRINE



Gang-froid

"In my movie, the gang is called Deuces," explains Steve Anderson, who has spent the last couple of years in L.A.'s most infamous neighborhoods writing and directing two films about black gang members. His first, a short called Hearts of Stone, *so impressed Oliver Stone that he became executive producer of Anderson's feature-length debut,* South Central. *Anderson, who is white, is anything but a typical boy 'n the hood. "I've taken some heat," he acknowledges. "But I'm not trying to teach black people anything. I'm trying to show everyone something: the lack of father-and-son relationships. I could have set it in any community. If Martians had kids, this story would fit."*

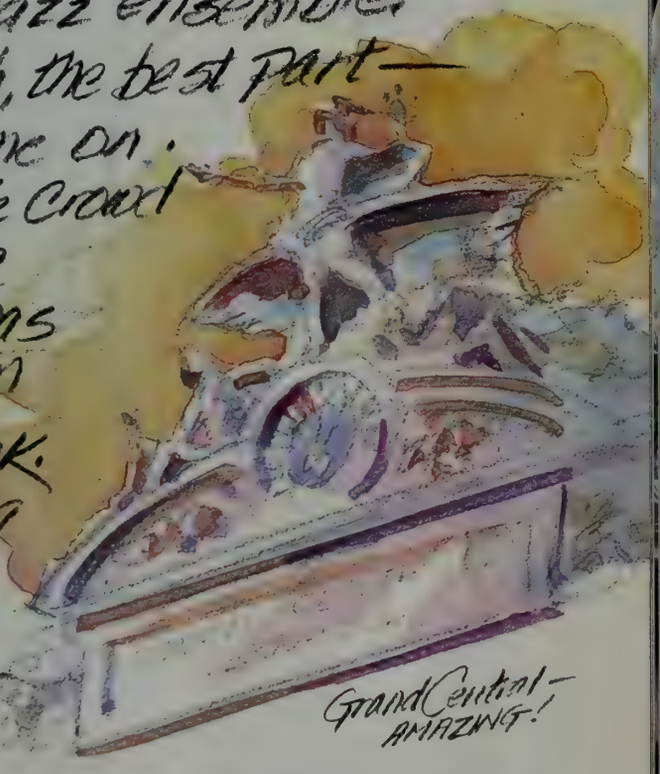
—BLAISE SIMPSON

*Anderson (*far left*) with* South Central*'s star Christian Coleman.*



After the show, we just headed down Broadway and fell into this charming cappuccino place. We were both still full from dinner, but we couldn't resist. Cozy little booths... A jazz ensemble. What a find. Oh, the best part— they had this singer come on. She was great. She had the whole crowd singing. Then, she passed the mic around and we all sang solos. It was hysterical. We stayed till 1:45 in the morning — and walked back. There was this guy selling paintings a few blocks from the hotel... and wouldn't you know, after 5 hrs. of searching for something for the kitchen wall, we found it in 2 minutes. You should've seen us. I don't know what was bigger — the painting or the grins on our faces. And all I kept thinking was





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Curriculum Vita


NIGEL PARRY

To the manner born: Author Nigel Nicolson at Sissinghurst Castle.

If you thought you'd had your fill of "Bloomsberries," prepare to tie on a new bib. In the U.S., PBS is broadcasting *Portrait of a Marriage,* based on Nigel Nicolson's biography of his parents, Sir Harold Nicolson and Vita Sackville-West. Theirs was an unorthodox union in which both took lovers of the same sex, yet remained devoted. Their chaste alliance struck a chord. After his book's publication, says Nicolson, "I became a marriage counselor to half the U.S." He was less gratified by the way the camera piled into bed in the TV adaptation. "No man wants to see his mother naked in bed with another woman." I should say not! The fling receives a cleaner airing in *Vita and Harold* (Putnam), a collection of his parents' letters edited by Nicolson. Their correspondence shows that words were their connective tissue. Their kisses were for others.—JAMES WOLCOTT

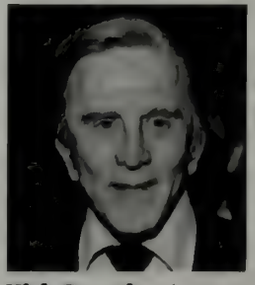
Night-table Reading



Whoopi Goldberg *(performer):* Jazz, *by Toni Morrison (Knopf), and* Race, *by Studs Terkel (New Press).*
"Between Morrison and Terkel, the ills of the world are succinctly answered. I just love them both."



Howard Jones *(musician):* The Heart of the World, *by Alan Ereira (Jonathan Cape).*
"I found it incredibly moving that the Kogi Indians, totally cut off from society, yet so affected by it, are begging the world to stop destroying the planet."



Kirk Douglas *(actor, writer):* The Words of Albert Schweitzer *(Newmarket).*
"I find that his ideas—reverence for life, familiarity with death, the sleeping sickness of the soul—influence my writing."



Jennie Livingston *(director):* Divine Horsemen, *by Maya Deren (McPherson & Co.).*
"She was a filmmaker who went to Haiti and ended up a Voudoun worshiper; this is essentially how an artist became transformed by her own work."



BRINGING UP BABY
Demi and four-year-old Rumer in Hawaii.

BARBARA'S BACKLASH

Suddenly the First Lady is reported to be a woman so fiercely calculating she puts Nancy Reagan to shame. But while she remains her increasingly unpopular husband's greatest asset, is Barbara Bush just demanding equal time after a long hard career as a devoted political wife? MARJORIE WILLIAMS reports on the sly side of the Silver Fox

Even Barbara Bush's stepmother is afraid of her. Over the course of a half-hour interview, Willa Pierce, the South Carolina painter the First Lady's widowed father married in 1952, hasn't commented on anything much more controversial than her famous stepdaughter's shoe size. But now, in a quavering voice, she is re-evaluating her decision to say anything at all.

"I could get in so much trouble if I said something she didn't agree with," the elderly widow says pleadingly. "Because you know how she is: she knows how she wants to appear to the world."

Indeed: Barbara Bush is America's grandmother, casual, capable, down-to-earth; she is fake pearls and real family. "I'm not a competitive person," she once said, "and I think women like me because they don't think I'm competitive, just nice." She bakes cookies, knits, needlepoints. She is funny, but mostly at her own expense. She is a woman so modest that she writes in the voice of a dog.

At a time when George Bush has slid almost fifty points in most polls in a little more than a year, Barbara Bush stands as close to universal popularity as any figure in American life. Her approval rating is forty, even fifty points higher than her husband's, and she gets as many as eight thousand letters a month. Aides call her "the National Treasure"—"the treasure" for short—in sly tribute to the qualities that make her an awesome asset to her husband.

The First Lady's hard work on causes ranging from AIDS to illiteracy has been justly praised, but it has also helped to obscure the void of the Bush domestic policy with a theater of activism. She is, first and foremost, her husband's alter ego, charged with showing his compassion in the areas that an aide merrily summarizes as "poverty, pain, and degradation, basically."

"In the thirty-some years I've been around American politics, she's far and away the greatest political spouse I've seen," says political strategist Edward J. Rollins, one of the managers of Ross Perot's campaign. And her help has never been more important than at the current moment, when political advisers to Bush have taken to joking that every one of the president's speeches should include the phrase "Barbara and I..."

It is an extra stroke of luck for the president that the Democrats' answer to Barbara Bush is Hillary Clinton. "I'll take a matchup between George and Barbara Bush and Bill and Hillary Clinton any day," says a senior Bush adviser. "People like Barbara Bush. And people don't like Hillary Clinton." Even if Ross Perot, not Bill Clinton, proves to be the greater threat to Bush's re-election, Margot Perot seems unlikely to divert much attention from the symbolic face-off between her more fa-

Illustration by RISKO


Rasko

mous counterparts. Republican strategists will be working overtime to remind us that the Arkansas governor's controversial wife is the perfect foil for the First Lady's image as the embodiment of all cardinal virtues.

It is an image that has been perfectly honed through almost four years at the White House. "Short of ax murder," says former Bush spokeswoman Sheila Tate, "I think she could get away with anything. She's so benign."

Then why are people so scared of her?

Current and former associates inevitably set anonymity as the price of any statement at variance with the myth.

"People always said Nancy Reagan would kill you if you said bad stuff about her," says one staff aide who worked closely with the Bushes during his vice presidency. "But I always thought Mrs. Bush was the one who would kill you.... No one sat around and gossiped about Mrs. Bush. I don't think it was that people loved her; I think everyone was scared of her. It was just like when your mother said, 'I have eyes in the back of my head.' "

People who have worked with the Bushes use words and phrases like "difficult"... "tough as nails"... "demanding"... "autocratic." A 1988-campaign staffer recalls that "when she frowned it had the capacity to send shudders through a lot of people."

And one longtime associate explained his refusal to talk—even to describe his most positive feelings about Mrs. Bush—by saying, straight-faced, "I don't want to be dead.... I really like her, but I don't go anywhere near her."

Some of the fear she inspires is a function of her position: no one wants to piss off a president by crossing his wife. But the widespread apprehension that Barbara Bush creates is also a fear of the woman herself.

The same reporters who spin misty reports of Barbara Bush toiling in soup kitchens discuss a different reality among themselves: the flinty stare she fixes on the source of a question she doesn't like; the humorous dig; the chilly put-down. For behind her rampart of pearls, the nation's most self-effacing celebrity is in fact a combative politician. Always there, not far below the surface, is the Barbara Bush who briefly emerged in 1984 to denounce Geraldine Ferraro as "that $4 million—I can't say it, but it rhymes with 'rich.' "

This Barbara Bush has a brilliant grasp of image, and has always understood a chief source of her appeal: that she is—as folks in Washington never tire of pointing out—Not Nancy.

During inaugural week in 1989 she made unmistakable digs at her predecessor, especially by spoofing her own new clothes: "Please notice—hairdo, makeup, designer dress," she said at one event. "Look at me good this week, because it's the only week."

Washington lapped it up—despite the fact that Barbara Bush had been wearing makeup, designer dresses, and "hairdos" for years. True, her earlier instincts had run to shirtwaists and circle pins. But by the time George Bush became president, his wife was a faithful customer of Arnold Scaasi and Bill Blass. Similarly, she has commissioned interior designer Mark Hampton to work on every house in which the Bushes have lived since 1981, both private and official.

Yet, today, she has successfully established her image as one too down-to-earth for fashion. "Personally, I think she's tougher than Nancy, but in a much more sophisticated way.... She's a pretty slick lady," says one sharp-eyed former Reagan aide, who counts such details as the $1,245 Judith Leiber bag that was a gift from the designer.

While she has excelled by poking fun at herself—her hair, her age, her waistline—aides have learned that they cannot count on this self-abasement: the First Lady is not amused when someone else tries to inject this note into a speech written for her.

Barbara Bush controls her press more tightly than Nancy Reagan ever dreamed of doing. She uses publicity to good effect when she sees an opportunity to deliver a useful message. In one of her first public events as First Lady, for example, she arranged to be photographed holding an AIDS baby, to convey the message that the disease can't be contracted through casual contact.

But she almost never sits down alone with news reporters who cover the White House regularly. Instead, she speaks to them a few times a year over ladylike luncheons in the family quarters, where they feel constrained by her hospitality. Reporters are social creatures, too, and are far less likely to lob a hostile question over the zucchini soup. (Mrs. Bush declined to be interviewed for this article, and most of her family, including her children, followed suit.)

Privately, she is a caustic and judgmental woman, who has labored to keep her sarcasm in check—with incomplete success. And once she notes a soft spot, says a longtime associate, "she hangs on forever. She never, ever, ever, *ever* lets go. She can just get under your skin and needle you."

"I mean," elaborates a former aide, "she's a good person, she talks about AIDS and stuff. But she's not this *nice* person."

One Washington regular—the second wife of a prominent man—tells of meet-



LADY-IN-WAITING

Barbara Pierce had already met George Bush when this picture was taken in Rye, New York, in 1943. "She was wild about him."

ing the First Lady at a recent party. Mrs. Bush, who had a slight friendship with the man's first wife, seemed "hostile" to the couple, "her vibes, the look on her face, everything. . . . She looked at me, and if looks could kill, I'd be dead," the woman relates. Hoping at least to make the conversation smooth, the second wife mentioned a mutual acquaintance, a Bush-family friend. She had met him, she said, through political circles, and had supported him in a recent, unsuccessful bid for office.

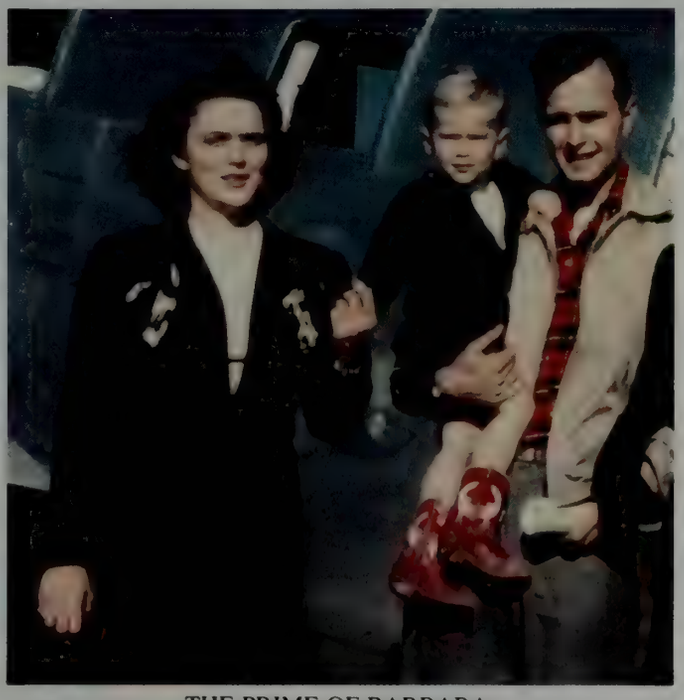
"Well," retorted the First Lady, "that is undoubtedly why he lost."

On a personal level, she can be domineering. Aides, old friends, even family members give eerily similar accounts of her offering unsolicited advice on appearance: "You've got to do something about your hair," she told one aide; to another, who had just grown a mustache, she said, "Has George seen that? Shave it off!" She is full of admonitions about smoking, now that she has given it up, and diet—*especially* diet.

Peggy Stanton, a friend from the years when Bush served in Congress, remembers being embarrassed at lunches of the congressional wives' club. "I was a pretty healthy eater, and Bar would say, 'Now, watch Peggy, she's going up for her third helping.' Which was true, but I didn't necessarily want the world to know."

"You're too fat," Barbara tells her younger brother, Scott Pierce, when he puts on weight. And when Bush was vice president, according to an aide, Barbara boiled over one day at the sight of the staffers eating junk food on Air Force Two. "She said we were all fat, we all ate too much, and from then on we would only get fruit and so on," a change that was instituted immediately.

The more people talk about Barbara Bush, the more confusing grows the disjunction between the image and the woman. Two apparently contradictory threads run through her history. The first is her rigorous fealty to the gender roles of her day. And the second is the clear force of her personality—the commanding will that has been diverted and disguised, but never extinguished, by her life as the humble helpmate of George Herbert Walker Bush. The two threads of her life come together in an uneasy suspicion that she has paid a heavy price for the image she has lived.



THE PRIME OF BARBARA

With the two Georges in Midland, Texas, circa 1950. Today, the Bushes present their relationship as beyond sex, but with other women Bush is "a biiiiiiig flirt."

"There's an essence of sadness about her, way deep down. Maybe a lot of who she is developed in reaction to sadness."

If this is Tuesday, it must be Miami Beach. Clean white limousines are packed like Chiclets at the curb of the convention center, where a thousand loyal Republicans have gathered to salute First Lady Barbara Bush as "National Statesman of the Year." They have forked over a little more than $800,000 to their state party, in amounts ranging from $500 to $10,000, for the privilege of eating a chicken dinner in her presence.

At seven o'clock they are herded into a curtained-off area of the huge exhibition space, its concrete floor and cavernous ceiling wanly cheered by a few potted ferns draped in Christmas lights. Like all political dinners, this one is interminable, with a dozen separate speeches, an invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance, a twelve-piece band, and a rendering of "God Bless America" by a choir of overmiked children.

The First Lady has been up since 5:30 in the morning, and has already flown to San Antonio (for a lunch-hour fund-raiser) and then back East to Miami. But to judge by her facial expressions, greatly magnified on a huge video monitor suspended over the crowd, she would rather be spending this night with a thousand rich Florida strangers in an echoing exhibition hall than spend it anywhere else on earth. She rewards every speaker's peroration with emphatic nods of agreement; she traverses even the dullest bits with her attentive, First Lady–listening expression firmly in place.

And these men do talk. The hour is ticking past 9:30 when Barbara Bush finally rises to speak.

She is *over-whelmed* by this whole evening, she tells the crowd.

She thanks the priest for his *bee-ooo-ti-ful* prayer.

She comments on the *wonder-ful* music.

She does so in a rich, cultured, carefully modulated voice that is still soaked, after forty-five years

of Texas and politics, in the affluent air of her childhood. A slight shock attends anything she says: for all the familiarity of her image, you suddenly realize that you have almost no memory of hearing her voice. It is one of the chief requirements of her job that she say as few genuinely memorable things as possible.

"I've known for years that I was the luckiest woman in the world," she says. "I do have the most *marvelous* husband, children, and grandchildren. We live in the greatest country in the world. And tonight you have honored me with such a great honor," she says. "I don't deserve it. Of course I'm going to accept it, but I don't deserve it."

To some degree, Barbara Bush's persona is a simple function of beautiful manners. I have watched her over and over in these First Lady tableaux: at a White House tea, cuddling a child who has a brain tumor; in New Hampshire, choking down yet another chicken breast at a Keene senior citizens' center; at the home of a grandmother in D.C.'s drug corridor, where she escorted the Queen of England—and where she actually made good enough small talk to bridge the gap between the hostess and her royal visitor.

Her exigent private manner is balanced, in public, by a universal graciousness. The only way to reconcile these two facets of Barbara Bush is to understand her as a woman of her class: the American social stratum that has always raised its children to assume their own superiority—and also to mask that assumption at all times.

Her roots are in Rye, New York, the kind of town that imparts an unconscious confidence: not quite so rich as Greenwich, Connecticut, just up the way, where George Bush was raised, but secure and Waspy and well-to-do.

The Pierces lived on Onondaga Street, in a five-bedroom brick house almost at the border of the Apawamis golf club. They didn't have a fortune, but they had a large social inheritance: Pauline Pierce was the daughter of an Ohio Supreme Court justice, and Marvin, a member of a once wealthy Pennsylvania iron clan, was a distant relative of President Franklin Pierce.

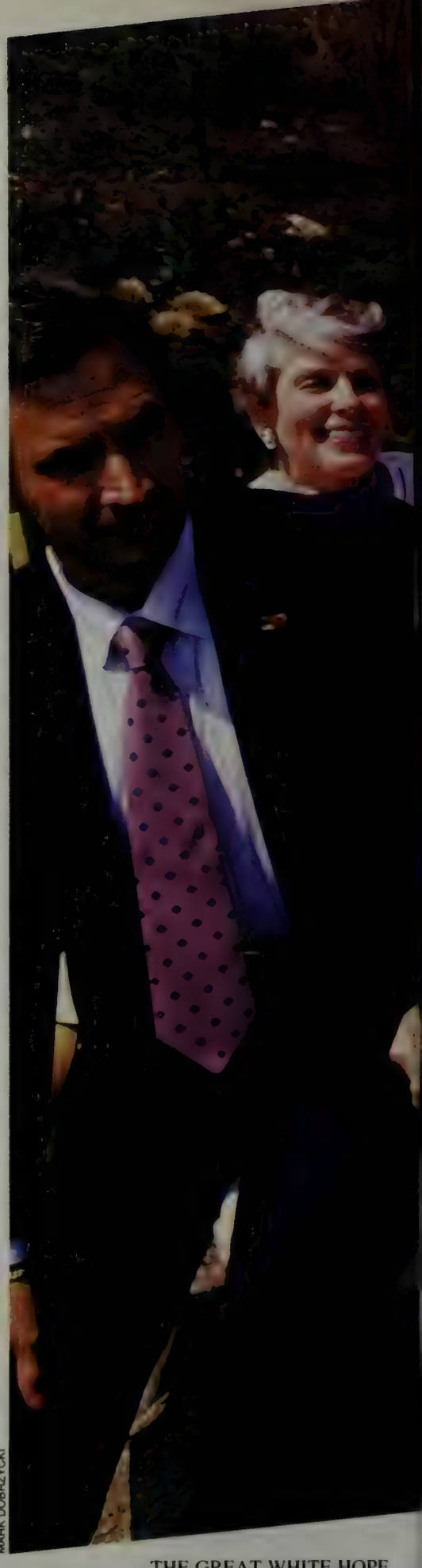
"We weren't rich" compared with some of the neighbors, says Scott Pierce, who still lives in Rye. "But we were certainly upper-middle-class."

Barbara, the third of four children, had a caustic tongue even as a child. June Biedler, who was one of Barbara's best friends, remembers her as "very articulate, very witty," and as "kind of a gang leader." When the girls boarded the school bus in the morning, "Barbara would have decided 'Let's not speak to June today.' Or Barbara would decide 'Let's not speak to Posy today,' and so the rest of us would obediently follow along and give that person a miserable time. And I don't remember that there was ever a 'Let's not speak to Barbara today' arrangement." Biedler stresses today that she loves and admires Barbara Bush, and believes that her friend grew up to be a kind and generous woman. But as a teenager, she recalls, "I thought Barbara was really mean and sarcastic." Among other things, she teased Biedler about her painful childhood stammer.

This cruelty, Biedler suggests, may have been the result of having "a mother that was a little mean to her." Pauline Pierce was a beautiful woman, but an exacting observer of social status. She was rather humorless, "austere," according to Biedler; "formal," in Scott Pierce's memory. She was particularly critical of Barbara, according to Donnie Radcliffe's biography, *Simply Barbara Bush*. In several of the stories Barbara tells of her childhood, one makes out Pauline's unpleasant concern that her younger daughter—a big girl, who by the age of twelve was five feet eight inches and weighed 148 pounds—might not cut it in the marriage market.

For her junior year in high school, Barbara followed her sister, Martha, to Ashley Hall, a genteel ladies' prep school in Charleston, South Carolina, the kind of place where a chaperon accompanied the girls to dances at the Citadel.

As photos attest, she had by then developed into a slim and pretty teenager, with pale skin and large, dark eyes. She was "at her prettiest," muses Biedler, "probably in her early twenties or in her late teens," but even then "she always had somebody who was prettier, like her sister." Martha, five years older, was devastating competition, a knockout who during college appeared on the cover of *Vogue*. Rosanne M. (Posy) Clarke, one of *(Continued on page 176)*



MARK DOBRZYCKI

THE GREAT WHITE HOPE

She may look benign, but Barbara Bush (in the Chicago Botanic Garden, 1989) is a combative politician. "She wants what's best for her husband, and boy, she's strong."



If George Bush walks a fine line
in his political tactics, Barbara is the line referee–
making sure that he doesn't cut it *too* close.

SPOTLIGHT

Red Menace

No, Bridget Fonda and Jennifer Jason Leigh weren't separated at birth. It is only through the miracle of modern hairstyling that they appear Siamese. In Barbet Schroeder's latest spooker, *Single White Female*, the two actresses act out that classic cautionary tale of urban folklore, the Roommate from Hell story. At first everything is milk and cookies. After dynamic Fonda accepts dowdy Leigh into her rent-controlled crib, they undergo intense bonding, shopping and cooking together, sharing the care. But when Leigh comes home from the salon one day sporting a matching haircut, the movie steps into the sinister mirror of identity snatching: I am you/you are me. Schroeder, who turned the Claus von Bülow trial into a witty gavotte in *Reversal of Fortune*, describes *S.W.F.* as Bergman's *Persona* crossed with Hitchcock and Polanski. But it sounds more like Robert Altman's *3 Women* minus the Jungian fish imagery. Like *3 Women* (with Sissy Spacek and Shelley Duvall), *S.W.F.* sports an interesting team. A southern belle in *Shag* and a reporter in *Godfather III*, Bridget Fonda carries her bones as if she were balancing knives. Leigh, however, is a consummate sponge, her pores sopping up the poison-mushroom atmosphere of *Last Exit to Brooklyn* and *Rush*. Her soft absence feeding off of Fonda's sharp presence should offer a psych lesson in parasite sisterhood. "I" is an illusion, say their becalmed eyes. At the bottom of every soul is a blank.

—JAMES WOLCOTT

Photograph by ANNIE LEIBOVITZ



HAIR BY CANDACE NEAL. MAKEUP BY TRACY SONDERN AND LIZBETH WILLIAMSON

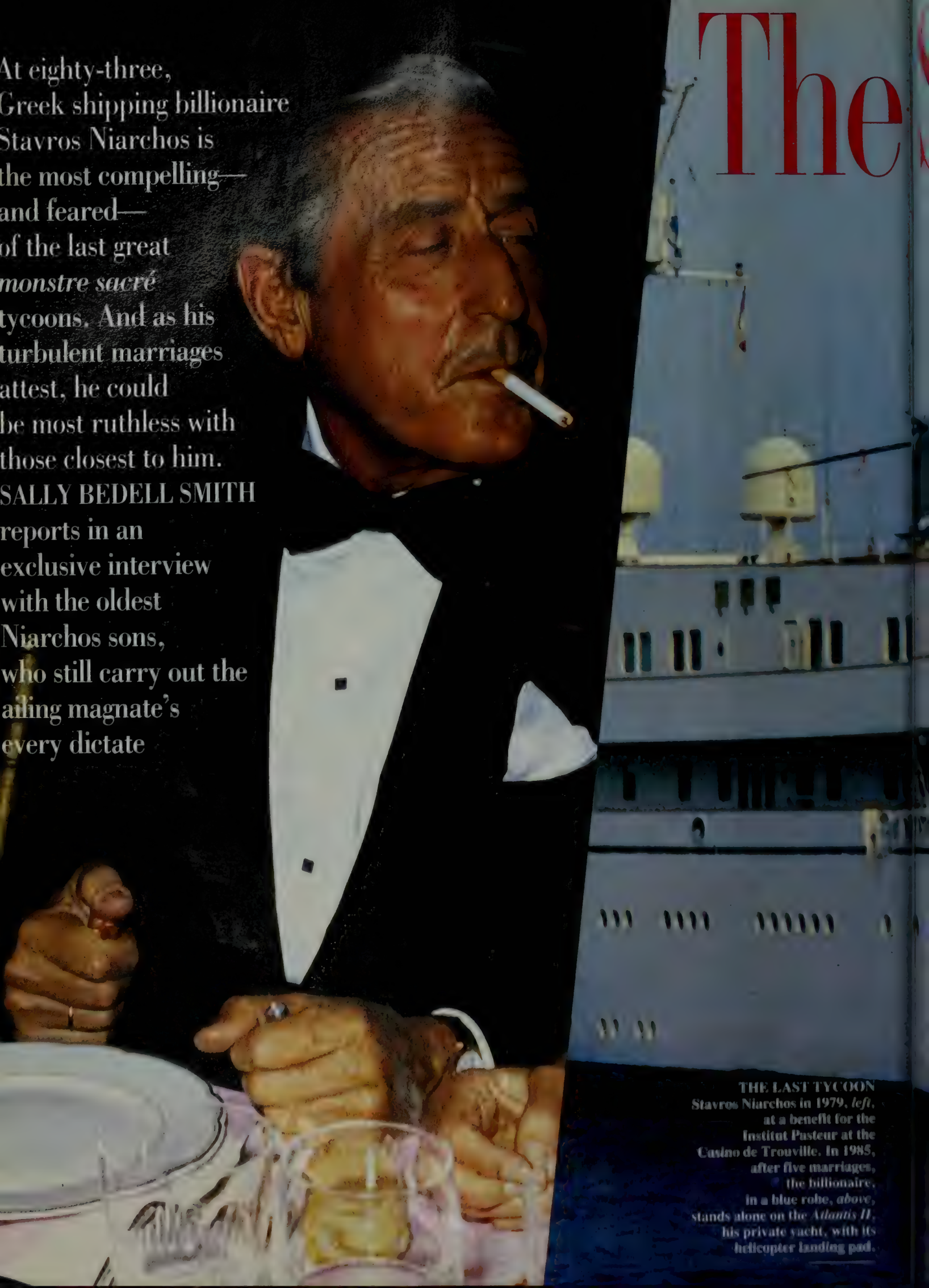


BRIDGET FONDA
AND
JENNIFER
JASON LEIGH

A psych lesson in parasite sisterhood.

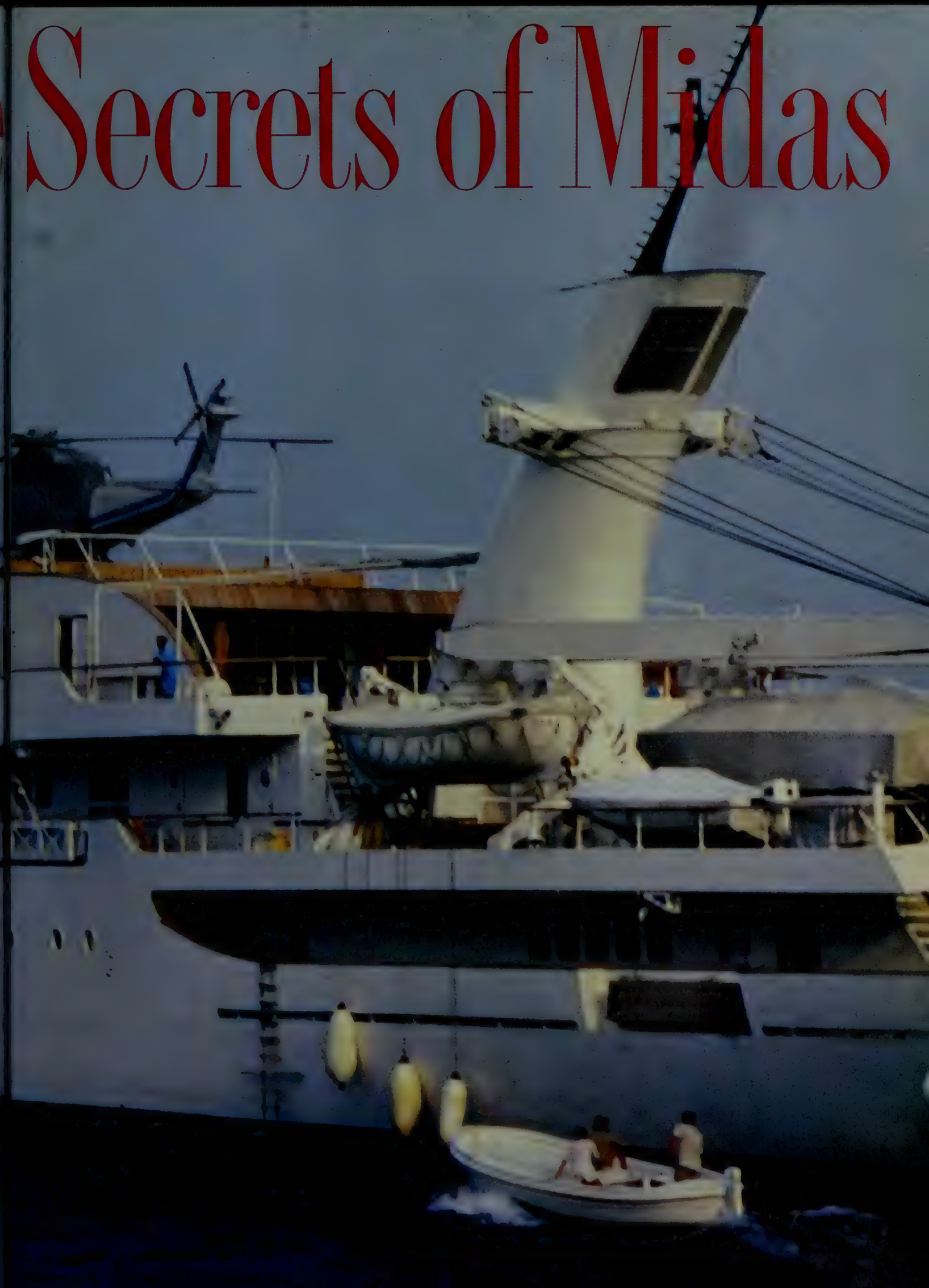
The

At eighty-three, Greek shipping billionaire Stavros Niarchos is the most compelling—and feared—of the last great *monstre sacré* tycoons. And as his turbulent marriages attest, he could be most ruthless with those closest to him. SALLY BEDELL SMITH reports in an exclusive interview with the oldest Niarchos sons, who still carry out the ailing magnate's every dictate



THE LAST TYCOON
Stavros Niarchos in 1979, *left*, at a benefit for the Institut Pasteur at the Casino de Trouville. In 1985, after five marriages, the billionaire, in a blue robe, *above*, stands alone on the *Atlantis II*, his private yacht, with its helicopter landing pad.

Secrets of Midas



Christina Onassis suspected murder in her

Behind high walls on a narrow street in the fashionable Seventh Arrondissement of Paris is a splendid house surrounded by spacious gardens. It is known as the Hôtel de Chanaleilles, and its eleven ornate salons and galleries are filled with eighteenth-century French furniture—an abundance of ormolu, marquetry, and inlaid porcelain. Above the mantel in the Grand Salon Rouge is a Gauguin copy of Manet's *Olympia*. Two van Goghs hang unobtrusively in the main dining room. On other walls are paintings by Vuillard, Pissarro, Renoir, and Toulouse-Lautrec. Underfoot are Savonnerie carpets designed for Louis XIV and XV. Floor-to-ceiling vitrines in one room display 373 pieces of antique Puiforcat silver that will one day go to the Louvre, and the Salon de Boiserie is paneled with black lacquer chinoiserie from a Viennese castle.

But just as conspicuous as the treasures are the omissions—the unfaded rectangles on the silk walls where even greater paintings used to hang, the barren tabletops that once gleamed with rare gold boxes and Fabergé bibelots, the empty vases that overflowed with lush arrangements of fresh flowers. The only personal touches are a half-dozen photos of the owner, four of his children, and his third wife, whose suspicious death on a Greek island more than twenty years ago still haunts the family. There are no pictures of his fifth wife, who died mys-



nother's death and pressed for an autopsy.





SERGE LIDO

UNHOLY MATRIMONY
Niarchos and his third wife, Eugenie Livanos, *near left*, during a visit with King Paul of Greece in 1956. *Inset, opposite*, Charlotte Ford Niarchos, wife number four and mother of the child Niarchos no longer sees. *Above*, Eugenie's sister, Tina, Niarchos's great love and fifth wife, with her first husband, Aristotle Onassis, Niarchos's arch-rival.

teriously in a small upstairs bedroom.

The owner of this grand but eerie house has barely seen it during the past decade. In its heyday, the Hôtel de Chanaleilles symbolized his triumphant acceptance by the top echelon of European society, which was impressed not only by his wealth but also by his unerring taste and easy hospitality. Now the lifeless rooms echo only tragedy. They are a monument to a man who has derived more joy from possessions than from people: Stavros Spyros Niarchos. Now eighty-three, he lingers from the age of the great tycoons.

The word "tycoon" is tinged with power and ruthlessness. The men who earned this label made great fortunes, dominated the people around them, acted the way they pleased—within or without the law. Wealth was the foundation of their power, but it was the way they acted that made them tycoons. Today the number of wealthy men is probably greater than it ever was, but only a handful are still able to control—with authoritarian simplicity—huge fortunes, far-flung conglomerates, legions of executives and scores of friends who are both loyal and cowed. Among this small group, Niarchos may be the most enigmatic—and most feared.

Worth an estimated $5 billion, he is one of the richest men in the world. He is also one of the most controversial, a man of dark reputation and brilliant skill in business. His private demons drove him to drink excessively for many years, to insult his wives, mistresses, and children, to alienate a long line of would-be friends. As unlikable as he is compelling, Niarchos remains distant even from those few who consider themselves close.

He made his fortune in shipping; in the mid-1960s, he owned some eighty ships, more than anyone else in the

How the Niarchos children will eventually run the family empire is anybody's guess.

world; today his two dozen vessels represent less than 10 percent of his worth. The cream of his art collection numbers 144 major works, mostly Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, including eight Renoirs, six Gauguins, and six each by Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec. Two years ago, when Japanese industrialist Ryoëi Saito paid a record $82.5 million for van Gogh's *Portrait of Dr. Gachet*, Niarchos inspected the painting at Christie's but declined to bid. According to his eldest son, Philip, he didn't need another portrait for his already ample collection of thirteen van Goghs. Niarchos's last major acquisition, *Yo Picasso*, a self-portrait, cost $43.5 million.

His bloodstock interests, some hundred horses at Niarchos stud farms in Normandy and Kentucky, are worth several hundred million dollars. He has vast investments in the financial markets, gold bullion, jewelry, and real estate. The luxurious Kulm Hotel in Saint-Moritz belongs to him, as do the Corvatsch ski lifts above the town. Besides Chanaleilles in Paris, he owns a château and a seventeenth-century manor house in Normandy, three chalets in Saint-Moritz, an apartment on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, a house on Lyford Cay in the Bahamas, and Spetsapoula, a two-thousand-acre island off the coast of Greece. His four-hundred-foot yacht, *Atlantis II*, worth more than $30 million, dominates the harbor of Monte Carlo.



Niarchos keeps his business empire and personal affairs fiercely private. Neither he nor anyone in his family has ever given an interview on television. Niarchos has offices in New York, London, Athens, and Monte Carlo, but these are for his minions. "What is his title—chairman?" I asked an assistant in the New York office. "He has no title," she said. The envelope flap on his stationery has no address, either. It reads simply STAVROS S. NIARCHOS in bold engraved letters.

For years Niarchos shared the spotlight with his arch-rival, Aristotle Onassis. Both self-made men, they appeared after World War II to shake up the inbred and conservative world of Greek shipowners. The two interlopers bought tankers as others bought real estate, putting up small amounts of money and borrowing the rest. They pioneered the supertanker, which dominates ocean trade to this day. Their visibility made shipping the most glamorous business of the postwar era, until Wall Street high rollers captured the public imagination not long after Onassis died in 1975.

Niarchos and Onassis were further linked by marriage to the daughters of Greek shipping magnate Stavros Livanos. Niarchos wedded the soft and engaging Eugenie, and Onassis captured the hot-blooded Tina. After Eugenie died, Niarchos shocked the world by marrying Tina, by then divorced from Onassis.

While the two men had parallel ambitions, they were temperamentally opposite. Onassis was warm, earthy, and open, and courted publicity. Niarchos was distant, chilly, and suspicious, and demanded privacy. While Onassis might clap a friend on the back, Niarchos would extend a businesslike hand. Unlike Onassis, whose coarse features and ever present sunglasses made him seem like a gangster, Niarchos has a fine-featured, aristocratic face. Women still remark on his beautiful smooth skin; one of his lovers, a Scandinavian model named Selene Mahri, spoke fondly of his "fantastic, bony, degenerate hands."

A combination of sensuality and strength has always made Niarchos alluring to women, and he has treated seduction as an entitlement. When he was younger, he followed women in his helicopter, flattering them into bed with his attentiveness. Once, he sent his pilot to Zurich from Saint-Moritz to buy some Morati cigarettes for a South American girl who had fallen under his spell. But when he lost interest, Niarchos could be brutal. "Aren't you the pretty girl I met in Monemvasía?" he said to an Italian model he had pursued a year earlier. "My God, you've lost your looks."

Since his fifth wife died in 1974, Niarchos has had a string of affairs with socially prominent women, including Princess Firyal of Jordan, perfume magnate Hélène Rochas, and Marina Palma, the wealthy daughter of an Italian industrialist. "He would never go around with a woman who was a nobody," says one longtime friend. "He would only have a relationship with a woman who was important in her own right."

In the grand European tradition, he has lavished money on his women for apartments and jewelry. When he and Firyal broke up in the early 1980s, he left her with millions, including a house on Chapel Street in London and a flat in Paris. Marina Palma walked out on him in 1989—after he forced a confrontation by refusing to let her spend Easter with her children—and then upstaged him by returning all his gifts. But to this day Palma says that she was deeply in love with him and that no man can measure up to him.

Although he has been off the social circuit for several years, "Stavros is one of the most talked-about men," says an Englishman who knows him



DESCENDED FROM OLYMPUS
Niarchos with Maria, his daughter by Eugenie, at her $500,000 wedding in Normandy, 1979. *Inset,* Elena, his daughter by Charlotte Ford, at her 1991 wedding, which Niarchos neglected to attend.
Opposite, Philip, Niarchos's oldest son, at his twentieth-birthday party at Le Club Privé in Paris, 1973.

Niarchos's last major acquisition, *Yo Picasso*

well. In the drawing rooms of New York and the great capitals of Europe, the doyennes of society are tantalized by the questions that have come to define the man: What part did he play in the death of his third wife? And his fifth wife? Why did he abandon the child from his fourth marriage, shotgun-style, to an American heiress? Will his other four children, once nicknamed the Niarchotics for their jet-setting ways, be able to take over his empire and hold it with the same iron grip? And ultimately, as Niarchos battles the infirmities of age, how long can he stave off death, the only force beyond his power?

Philip and Spyros Niarchos rise from the sofa as a butler escorts me into the large drawing room of Villa Marguns, their father's home in Saint-Moritz. The room is a disconcerting blend of rusticity and opulence. Some of the walls are paneled with rough planks from a Swiss barn, the rest are covered with a richly woven floral tapestry that is repeated on various sofas and chairs throughout the room. The coffered ceiling with intricately carved wood rosettes and moldings was designed by Renzo Mongiardino a few years ago, Philip says, "to make the room warmer."

Niarchos is attended by thirty-eight-year-old Philip and thirty-seven-year-old Spyros, his two eldest sons. If one goes away on a trip, the other remains with him. Their devotion is rooted in filial loyalty—and awe. "He says 'Jump,' they say 'How high?' " says one Greek who knows them well. "They respect him, but the attitude is very old-fashioned, very Oriental," says an Italian man who is friendly with the Niarchos sons. Observes a European who knows the family, "You meet Philip and Spyros out in the world and they are dashing young men. With their father they are like schoolboys, with eyes cast down and nervous."

On the day of my visit, their father rests upstairs. His nurse, dressed in white shirt and slacks, barely glances up as she emerges from his rooms through a paneled door. Tacked to the door is a letter chart of the sort used by eye doctors. The spacious center hallway outside is dominated by a jolting portrait of Niarchos by Julian Schnabel. Extending from floor to ceiling, and recessed behind two columns, the painting shows Niarchos against an electric-blue background, standing on the deck of the *Atlantis,* with two shadowy images of his face at earlier ages painted in the lower corners.

In recent years Stavros Niarchos has grown increasingly reclusive. Determined to overcome physical frailty, terrified of death, he has become obsessed with his health. Niarchos flies to Houston on his $23 million Falcon 900 for a checkup with Dr. Michael DeBakey, the renowned heart surgeon, the way an ordinary mortal visits his local internist. Two years ago he pierced one of his eyes when he fell against a television antenna, and surgery saved him from blindness. He wears thick glasses, and his hearing is impaired—both of which make him self-conscious with outsiders. He also speaks so rapidly and indistinctly that many listeners haven't a clue what he is saying.

Recently, a condition called spinal stenosis made walking difficult. In an effort to improve his mobility, he underwent back surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital last fall. His attitude toward such problems, says Philip, is "very logical." Niarchos interviewed numerous doctors about his problem, many of whom advised against surgery, until he found the man who was able to perform a successful operation. Now he follows a strict regimen of cortisone treatments, massages, exercise, and rest. "I am concentrating what little energy I have on staying alive," he told Countess Marina Cicogna, a friend since the 1950s, last summer in Venice. "I don't like to entertain guests anymore."

Philip and Spyros are polite but clearly apprehensive as we settle into an alcove of the drawing room underneath a large Monet. Two butlers serve tea from a silver service. Explains Philip, "You are the first journalist Spyros and I have ever sat down and talked to."

Both sons are small like their father, who is five feet five. Curly-haired Philip has deep-set black eyes, a ready smile, and a reserved charm reminiscent of his genteel mother, Eugenie. Spyros is his father's doppelgänger, with the same thin lips and hawkish nose. Like Stavros, he speaks with a pronounced lisp: Spyros's friends have commented that, while he seems more outgoing than Philip, he has his father's suspicious nature.

When they emerge from the shadow of Stavros Niarchos, Philip and Spyros are destined to become major forces in international society. They are married to glamorous, wellborn Englishwomen who share the Guinness surname; Philip's wife, Victoria, is from the merchant-banking branch (her grandfather was wealthy jet-setter Loel Guinness), and Spyros's wife, Daphne, belongs to the Anglo-Irish brewing clan.

Philip and Spyros work each day with their father at Villa Marguns. "We do the same things. We are interchangeable," says Philip, noting that each brother is familiar with shipping, securities, real estate, and other aspects of the Niarchos empire. Their father, Philip says, is still "very active" and makes all key decisions about his business interests. He works entirely by telephone, calling on Philip and Spyros to represent him in meetings when necessary.

"One cannot be romantic about business," says Philip when asked whether they share their father's passion for shipping. Adds Spyros, "Shipping has really been in a slump since 1972." It won't be a great business again, he says, until the world economy improves. Their role in working for their father, Philip says, is to carry out his wishes and to explore new business opportunities that interest him. Following the pattern of their father, they make time in their workdays for dollops of pleasure—perhaps a couple of hours of skiing or a gathering with friends at the exclusive Corviglia Club up the hill from Suvretta. Although Philip lives down the road in a house called Relaxez-Vous, and Spyros uses Chesa Godet, another of Niarchos's houses, they often take both lunch and dinner at their father's table.

Because Niarchos is such a hermit, Philip and Spyros and their wives and children lead cloistered lives, moving from Saint-Moritz to the *Atlantis II* in Monte Carlo to Spetsapoula. They have

cost $43.5 million.



A DAY AT THE RACES
Playboy Niarchos with his prize racehorse Nureyev at the 2000 Guinness Stakes in Newmarket, Suffolk, 1980. His bloodstock interests in Normandy and Kentucky are worth several hundred million dollars.

barely seen the homes in Normandy, much less spent any significant time in Paris, London, or New York. "They have no choice," says a Greek friend of the sons'. "They are the empire. But they don't have lives of their own."

"To some it may seem that they are in prison," Peter Payne, a longtime Niarchos intimate who worked for him during the 1950s and who speaks frequently to him on the phone, told me. "People who don't say the best things about Stavro say he is a tyrant. I say that's not true. All right, he is an overpowering person, but these boys have a helluva good time. And remember, they love their father."

Yet when I ask Philip what else he would do with his life if he could, he pauses for a moment and says almost poignantly, "I'd take a two-week vacation somewhere." There is no trace of irony as he sits in the midst of what to anyone else would be the ultimate vacation fantasy. Then he adds hastily, "It would be hard to take two weeks away when one has the business to attend to."

The other two children of Stavros and Eugenie occupy more peripheral roles. Diminutive thirty-three-year-old Maria is known as the nicest Niarchos, so down-to-earth she once worked as a "lad" in one of her father's stables. Now she efficiently runs the Niarchos bloodstock business by fax, phone, and computer from Malaysia, where she lives with her second husband, a Parisian banker named Stephan Gouaze. "She is like her father," says Rosemarie Kanzler, an old family friend. "She has lots of brains, and she is hardheaded."

The baby of the family, Constantine, is the renegade. Defiant and volatile, he was expelled from Harrow and Gordonstoun for drug-related offenses, and he recently broke off a relationship with Koo Stark, the photographer who was once linked with Prince Andrew. Friends say that thirty-year-old Constantine may be the most intelligent of the four, but he has been diminished by excessively high living. Although in the past he has been known to leak tidbits about his family to reporters, he is trying now to placate his father. "I have absolutely no comment to make," he said when I telephoned him, his cultured voice edged with fear.

As a victim, Constantine is overshadowed only by Elena, the cast-off child of Niarchos's brief fourth marriage, in 1965, to automobile heiress Charlotte Ford. Raised by her mother in New York, Elena is a stranger to her father as well as her four siblings. Now a plump twenty-six-year-old, Elena was married late last year to her partner in Stanley O's, an estate-maintenance service in Southampton, Long Island. Before announcing the engagement, Charlotte called to invite Niarchos to see his daughter and her fiancé. "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I'll call you tomorrow," he replied. The call never came. Nor did he attend the wedding. "Of course he was invited," says a close friend of Charlotte's. "There was no response, not even a call to say congratulations."

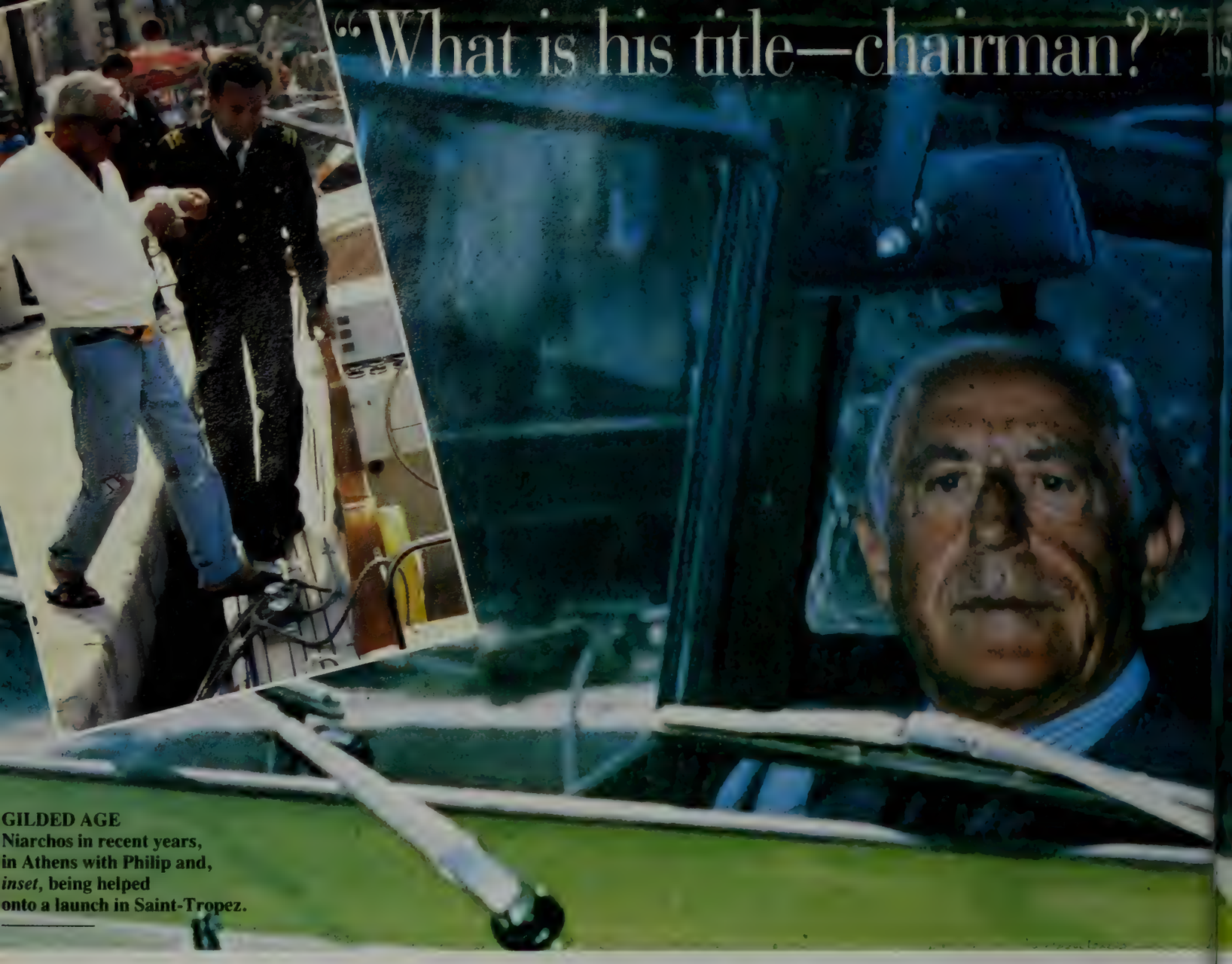
A wealthy and powerful man, no matter how ruthless and difficult, can always find redemption in charm. Niarchos rarely bothers. Most people who have crossed paths with him agree on a string of unpleasant adjectives: disagreeable, arrogant, snobbish, aloof. "You never hear him saying, 'She's so dear,' or 'He's such a great guy,' " says an Englishman who has often sat at the Niarchos table. "He's brutally honest. He doesn't give a damn about antagonizing people." As a consequence, many find him frightening. "He is very cerebral, and not very human," says one New York socialite. "He doesn't seem to connect with the needs of other people."

When Niarchos sets his mind on something, he lets nothing get in his way. "He doesn't have to consider any consequences," explains an Italian friend. Some years ago he bought a house on Lyford Cay sight unseen. Since he never stayed there, he told his office to rent it out—until one day he decided to have a look. "But it's rented," his people told him. "Get them out," replied Niarchos. He ended up staying only for the weekend.

His temper can flare over trifles. Once, on his airplane, Niarchos asked an aide to open a two-thirds-of-a-pound tin of caviar. When he detected that someone had eaten a small amount, he threw the entire tin away. "He was Jekyll and Hyde," says a woman who knew him intimately. "He was always mysterious. You never knew what he would do from one moment to the next. He could change with just one phone call."

Nor is the fabled "Golden Greek" known for much of a sense of humor,

RICHARD SLADE



GILDED AGE
Niarchos in recent years, in Athens with Philip and, *inset*, being helped onto a launch in Saint-Tropez.

particularly about himself. One New Yorker recalls visiting Niarchos at his suite in the Waldorf Towers. The man glanced at the obviously mediocre paintings on the walls and noted ironically, "I see you've brought some of your collection with you." Niarchos, says the man, "gave me a look of absolute rage."

His intense self-involvement can be tiresome. A Greek journalist, Helen Vlachos, described him as "one of the few genuinely boring clever men that I have ever met. Maybe it is the jarring quality of his voice, maybe his persistent obsession with whatever is his interest of the moment, and his tireless, monotonous repetition of what he has on his mind. He does not really care if you are interested or not."

Yet Niarchos's rise to the top of international society was based on more than the size of his bank account. He courted the Duke and Duchess of Windsor so assiduously that the Duchess remarked to a fellow guest on the Niarchos yacht, "He must really be a snob, because we're both so boring." The small circle of Niarchos friends now includes Fiat chairman Gianni Agnelli, the Duke of Beaufort, and King Juan Carlos of Spain. With Agnelli, says Peter Payne, "there is no jealousy. They both lead the same sort of tycoon life." But, adds Payne, "Agnelli is an industrialist, with responsibilities, labor unions, the Italian political game. Nothing encumbers Niarchos. That is an enormous source of power."

Intimates say Niarchos is misunderstood because he is a nonconformist who has stubbornly chosen to keep his life private. Says one woman who has been close to the Niarchos family, "They are private not because they love being mysterious but because they don't want to be uncomfortable. They like only close friends, people they can trust. Stavros is a moody S.O.B., but he is not mean to everyone." His direct manner, says Denise Thyssen, another old friend, "makes him actually quite down-to-earth." Peter Payne claims that in quiet, relaxed moments Niarchos is "one of the wittiest men." A business associate of long standing notes that Niarchos has lent his artwork generously over the years, but "he has received no credit because he always does so anonymously." Rosemarie Kanzler, for five decades a prominent fixture on the international social circuit, says, "If somebody is in the hole, he would try to get them out. He helped me in my last divorce."

Yet friendship with Niarchos can be a one-way street. "In conversation he won't listen to you," says one Italian friend. "He is funny that way. He shows affection by asking a few questions about how things are, but it's a quick survey and on to something else." To join the Niarchos circle, one has to accept his insistence on loyalty and privacy—and recognize, as Peter

INSET PHOTOGRAPH BY JEAN-PIERRE THEVENIN



Payne puts it, that "he knows he can always call me up, no matter what time."

The Niarchos charm, such as it is, springs not from personality but from power, and the quirky style that comes with it. His attention to detail can be astonishing. In 1987 he gave a luncheon at Chanaleilles on the occasion of his son Spyros's marriage to Daphne Guinness. "Every time one glanced at a painting, a servant came over and whispered who painted it and in what year," recalled one awestruck guest.

As a host, Niarchos is famous for creating an atmosphere of ultimate self-indulgence and security. "You are under his wing, and you feel nothing is going to happen to you, he is so powerful," says an Italian man who used to call Niarchos "Goldfinger." "It is a magic feeling, like being on another planet." British friends still talk about the time the Duke of Marlborough asked for a glass of port after dinner on Niarchos's island, Spetsapoula, and was told there was none. The next night the butler said to the duke, "Here is a glass of port for Your Grace." Niarchos had had a bottle flown in from Paris.

"Stavros is unbelievably unbearable, but in an odd way I have respect for him," says Marina Cicogna, reflecting the sentiments of other friends as well. "He has always lived his own life. Whatever he has done has been strange, but at a high level. I find him totally different from anybody else, totally original, and very intelligent."

"Stavros is sort of a wellborn Greek," one wellborn Englishman told me emphatically. "He was originally a Greek naval officer." Well, yes and no. Although Niarchos has never denied having made his own fortune, he has fostered the impression that he had proud origins. Actually, his father's family were peasants from a tiny village outside Sparta who immigrated to the United States in the late nineteenth century. They settled in Buffalo, where his father operated a candy store with NIARCHOS displayed in neon lights above the door. On a visit to Greece, a newly prosperous Spyros Niarchos attracted the attention of Eugenia Coumandaros, whose middle-class family ran a successful grain-and-feed business in Sparta.

Spyros took his bride to America but returned to Greece several years later, when she grew homesick. Using the money he had made in Buffalo, he invested in the Coumandaros flour mill in the seacoast town of Piraeus. He and his brothers-in-law made enough money to send young Stavros to private school.

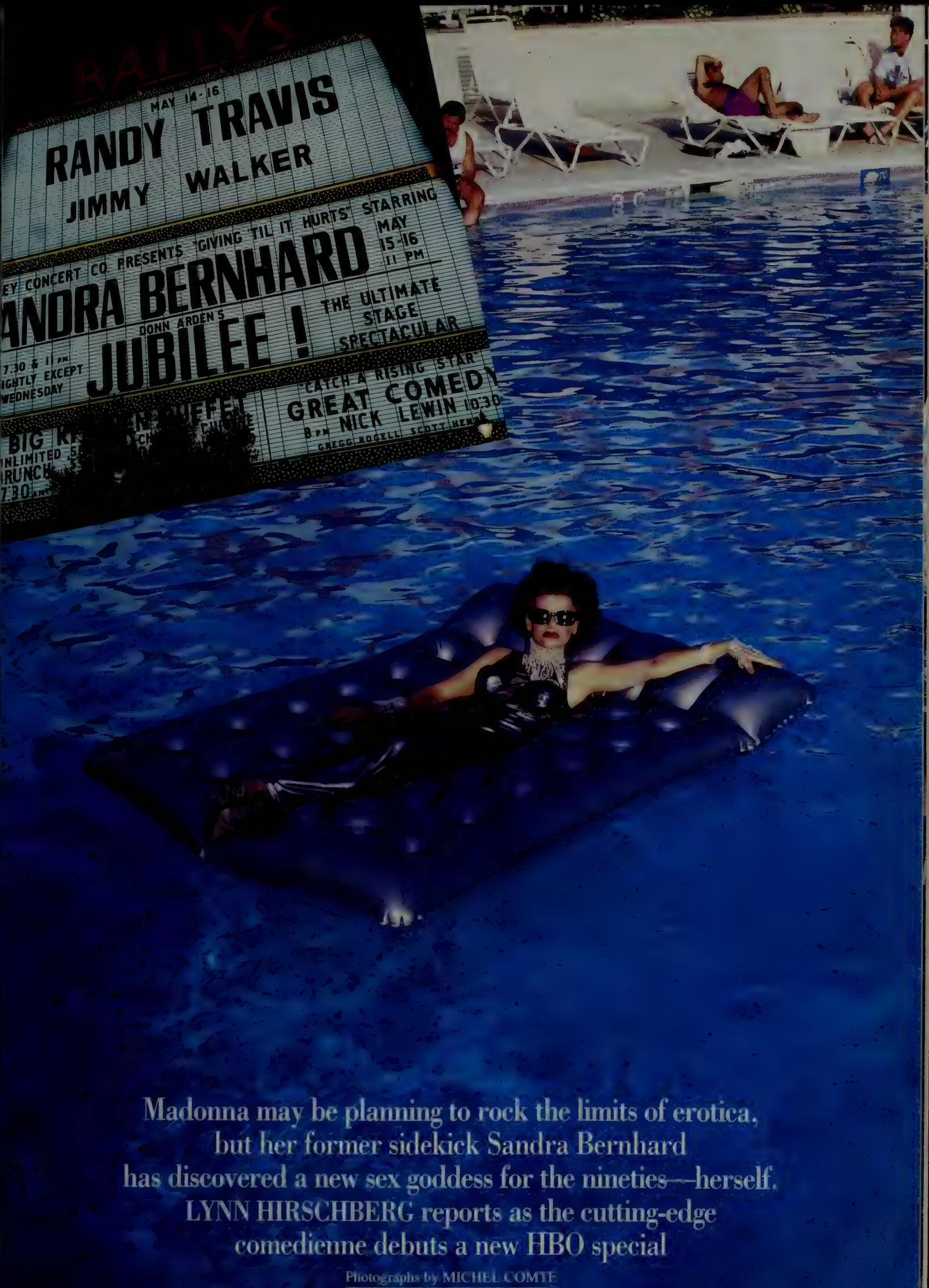
When Stavros Niarchos was fourteen, his father went bankrupt after speculating in the stock market. Stavros transferred to a public school, and, later, the family was so pinched that he was unable to complete his *(Continued on page 181)*



BERNHARD TIMES

With show girls from the Vegas revue *Jubilee!* and making waves in the pool at Bally's

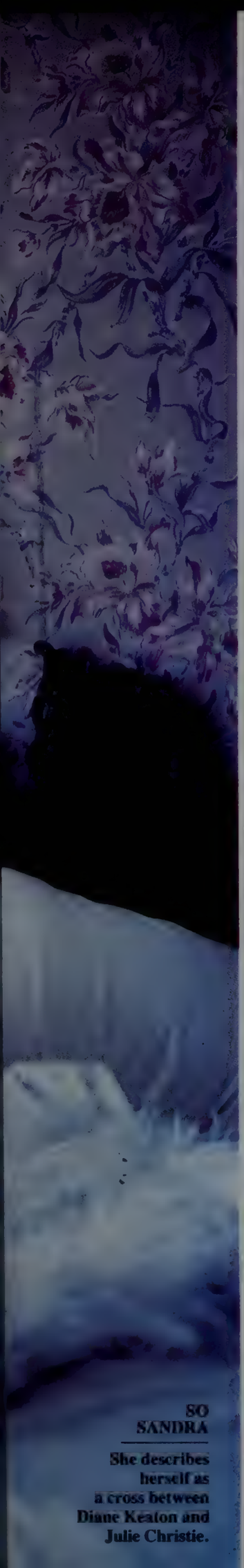
THE NAKED SANDRA



Madonna may be planning to rock the limits of erotica, but her former sidekick Sandra Bernhard has discovered a new sex goddess for the nineties—herself. LYNN HIRSCHBERG reports as the cutting-edge comedienne debuts a new HBO special

Photographs by MICHEL COMTE


“I’m getting what I want.
And what I deserve.”



STYLING THROUGHOUT BY STEPHEN EARABINO FOR VISAGES STYLE; BRA BY JOSIE NATORI; BLANKET AND GLOVES BY ADRIENNE LANDAU

SO SANDRA

She describes herself as a cross between Diane Keaton and Julie Christie.

Sandra Bernhard likes to take her clothes off. She's naked in her new HBO special, *Sandra After Dark*. A few months from now, she'll be nude—and, in one shot, painted gold—in a *Playboy* pictorial. And right now, before a quarter-empty auditorium at Bally's Casino Resort in Las Vegas, Bernhard has slipped out of her see-through sequined gown, and except for a purple thong bikini bottom, she is, yes, naked. "Take it off!" someone yells. She smiles her odd, downturned smile. The thought has definitely occurred to her.

As her onstage dresser holds open another sequined dress for her to step into, Bernhard pivots her body so that her bare breasts face the audience. She pauses. She stares. Her band, the Strap-Ons, plays that ode to built women, "Brick House." She has never looked happier. She may never get dressed again.

"I'm an exhibitionist," Bernhard explains a while later over a hamburger at Bally's coffee shop. Her manner offstage, like her manner on, is somewhat surly. But now she *is* dressed, and she's shed the painted-gargoyle regalia—false eyelashes, *red red* lips, Bride of Frankenstein hair. Still, she doesn't so much converse as hold forth. She is stunningly consistent in her choice of topic.

"I'm very comfortable with my body," she says, munching a French fry. "I like it. And my work is naked. It's another level of exposure to me. Another way to push the limit."

But it would be too taxing to explain what new frontier, exactly, she is pioneering. Her tone is flat, her expression tired. She talks instead about how beautiful she is.

It wasn't always this way.

The youngest child and only daughter of a proctologist father and abstract-artist mother, Bernhard, who is thirty-seven, had a surprisingly carefree life in Michigan and Arizona before coming to prominence in Martin Scorsese's disturbing and brilliant 1983 film, *The King of Comedy*. Her portrayal of Masha, a fan who becomes fixated on a Johnny Carson–esque talk-show host (played by Jerry Lewis), was one of those seamless triumphs—a portrait of a tightly wound, specifically insane exhibitionist.

"It was intended to make people uncomfortable and I did that *very* well. If I'd had my way after *King of Comedy*, I would have been a huge movie star. I thought I'd get offered roles in the Diane Keaton–Julie Christie area. I think of myself as a cross between those two."

To her chagrin, she was offered the role of the assistant (eventually played by Annie Potts) in *Ghostbusters*, and really not much else. So she went back to playing comedy clubs in L.A.; she recorded an album of Top 40–type songs. And then she started turning up on *Late Night*.

Those appearances went Masha one better. David Letterman was the perfect repressed foil for Bernhard's lunacy. She got to him through sex. She'd pretend they were lovers—once even appearing on the show with a pregnant stomach, claiming that Dave was the dad. She'd sit on his lap, she'd kiss him, he'd squirm. When she and Madonna came on dressed like twins and hinting that they were lovers, Letterman seemed about to implode. (The briefly-best-friends no longer speak—Madonna reportedly tired of Sandra's braggadocio.)

One minute, Bernhard would tell a reporter that she was gay, then she'd yell at *People*, "I'm not a lesbian and I'm sick of being called one." Oh, the intrigue, the infinite mystery, of her true sexual preference. "I can't say that I necessarily love to fuck men, but I do like them," she explains. "I'm very small. I'm very tender. I can't handle all that violent action." Is there, one wonders, a man small enough for Sandra? "Maybe there's a man out there who can change my mind."

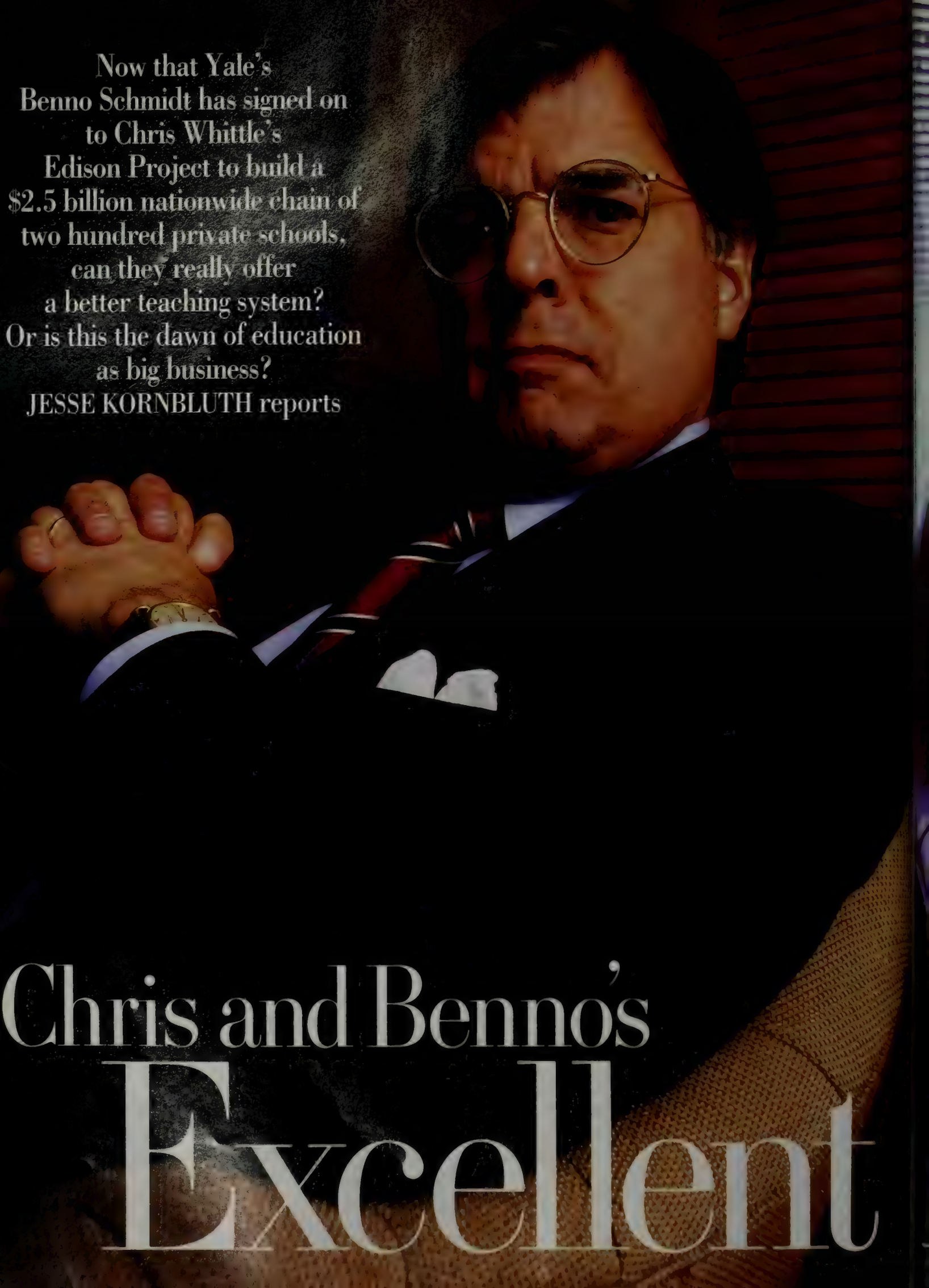
Her Off Broadway show (and subsequent movie), *Without You I'm Nothing*, was all about Sandra relating to fame, style, songs from the seventies, and, of course, sexuality. The movie is a docudrama of an ego on the loose. Rarely has any performer made the hunger for full-out spotlight sex-bomb-baby attention plainer. But while she seemed obsessed, her obsession was contagious.

And then Sandra took another long look in the mirror and discovered she really *was* beautiful.

"I'm described all the time as '*jolie-laide*,' the beautiful-ugly thing," she says with no small amount of outrage. "And it's, like, 'Fuck you, man.' I'm not some blonde bimbo, but I'm fucking hot. A lot of people want to fuck me."

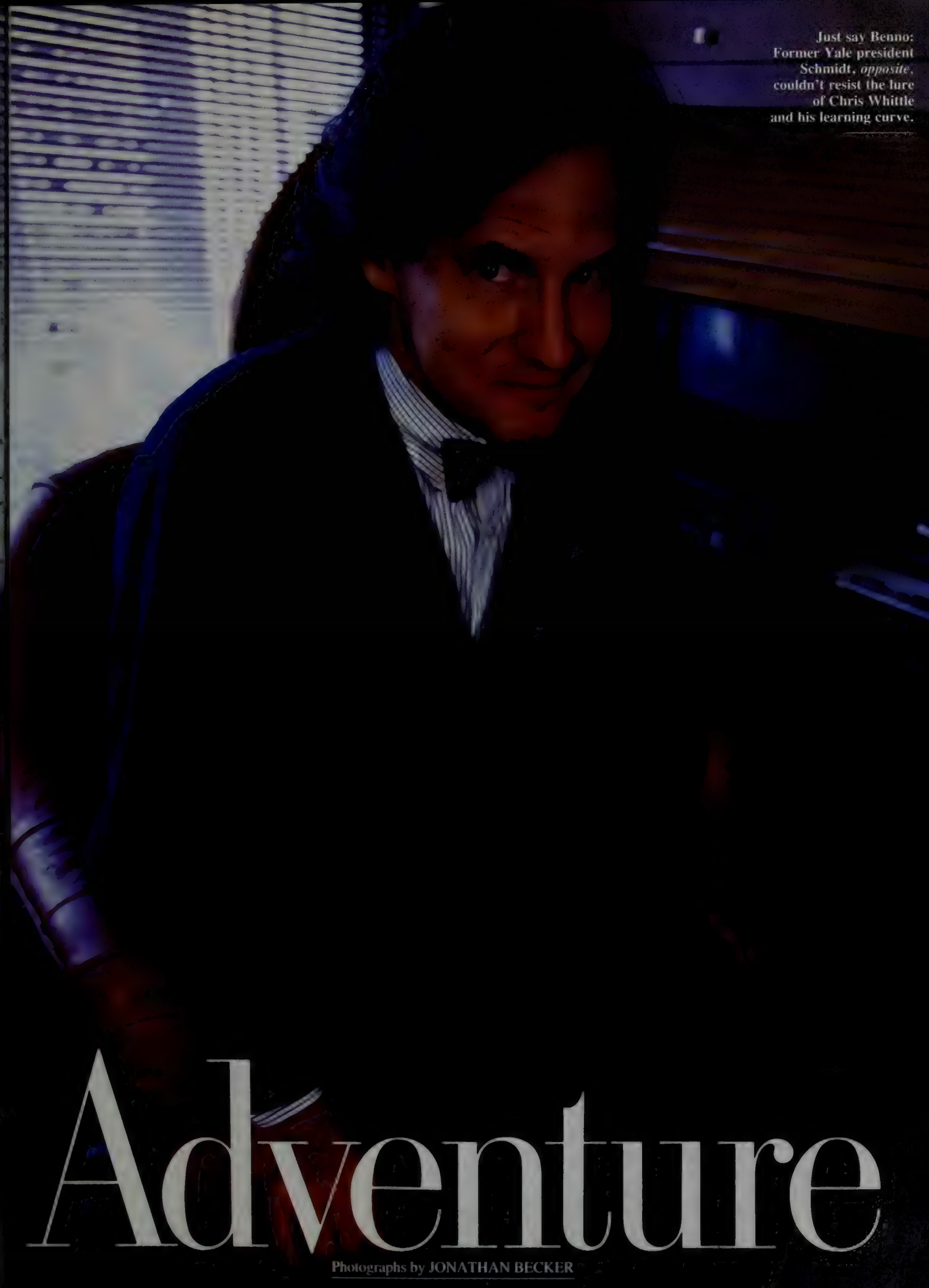
She is hanging out with models these days ("It's the world I love the most"), and still plying sly references to her "breakup" with Madonna ("She was the best lover I ever had"). But vanity is the most demanding mistress of all. She was dying to pose in *Playboy*—she volunteered—because it is yet another affirmation of her lustrous beauty. ("I know I've jerked off over *Playboy*, so why not everyone else? I think I should be partially responsible for getting the world off.")

Bernhard looks around the restaurant, her face set in a permanent snarl. "I'm getting what I want," she says rather grandly. "And what I deserve, if you can be that egotistical. I love my life. I am becoming an icon." □



Now that Yale's Benno Schmidt has signed on to Chris Whittle's Edison Project to build a $2.5 billion nationwide chain of two hundred private schools, can they really offer a better teaching system? Or is this the dawn of education as big business? JESSE KORNBLUTH reports

Chris and Benno's Excellent



Just say Benno: Former Yale president Schmidt, *opposite*, couldn't resist the lure of Chris Whittle and his learning curve.

Adventure

Photographs by JONATHAN BECKER



"I play on the cusp, which isn't to say on the edge," says Whittle.

Reflecting Channel One's success, Whittle says he's increasing ad rates from $150,000 to $200,000 for a thirty-second spot.

Chris Whittle can't help himself. He has an idea, he inflicts it on the people he meets. Most times, that works for him; he pitches, they react, he goes away wiser and, soon enough, a bit richer. Along the way to a self-made fortune that's somewhere north of $40 million, he's experienced very few conversational disasters.

On that short list, Ed Victor, the international literary agent, and his wife, Carol, might—until recently—have noted a small dinner they gave in Bridgehampton in the summer of 1990. There, Whittle felt an overwhelming need to talk about education. And there, he definitely seemed to crash and burn.

A year earlier, he had launched Channel One, a television news service that gave public and private schools not only a free twelve-minute current-events program each day but also free satellite dishes, free cable wiring, free videotape units, and free television sets for every classroom. In return, Whittle exacted just one promise: students were all but *required* to watch both the news show and the two minutes of commercials embedded in it. "Academic acid rain," his critics cried. Educational "junk food."

Critics meant nothing. Channel One became a huge financial success, making Whittle the Ted Turner of the *Beverly Hills, 90210* set and encouraging him to contemplate an even more audacious business—a national chain of private schools. Now, over dinner at the Victors', he tossed that idea onto the table. And the guests pounced. "I was. . . skeptical," recalls Peter Jennings, who cares enough about schools to make education a regular feature on his nightly news show.

The one professional educator at this dinner—Benno Schmidt Jr., who had just completed his fourth year as president of Yale University—was just as skeptical. "For me, the evening's big event was when a guest, after taking a bite of the magnificent fresh tuna steak Ed Victor had practically tagged in mid-ocean and marinated to perfection, said, 'Oh, summer on Long Island—you just go down to the market, buy any fish, and throw it on the grill.' As for Chris, I mostly remember that we banged on him pretty hard. The unspoken predicate was: What do *you* know about education?"

Chris Whittle can't help himself; controversy energizes him. The following spring, as he was making the first of many announcements of what he now called the Edison Project, he went to New Haven to talk with Schmidt about his plan to bring what one critic would deride as the "Kentucky Fried Children" approach to American education. Schmidt, unsurprisingly, was all for better schools. But his enthusiasm was definitely not personal. Whittle didn't mind at all.

"You're going to think I'm crazy," Whittle said, "but I'm going to ask you to leave Yale and head this."

"I do think you're crazy," Schmidt replied.

"Don't say no too quickly."

"I can't possibly leave Yale—even if I wanted to do this," Schmidt said.

For Chris Whittle, *no* is merely foreplay for *yes*. He wrote Schmidt a heartfelt seven-page letter that jump-started a series of more serious conversations. A hundred hours of private talks later, Schmidt sent lawyers and accountants to scour Whittle's books. And then, last winter, almost as if Whittle had willed it, Schmidt presented Yale with a restructuring plan that his faculty resoundingly rejected. Suddenly, it seemed as if Whittle had it right—by leaving Yale, Schmidt could get back into education.

"I think that's great," Whittle said when Schmidt called him this spring with the good news. "And I don't care what anybody says—you did the right thing."

The day after Yale's commencement exercises in May, Whittle announced that Schmidt would be leaving the campus at some point before the end of the year to lead the Edison Project. The reaction at Yale was mixed: shock that its president was giving the equivalent of two weeks' notice and going to work for a man whose idea of an educational experience was Channel One, regret that Yale's greatest fund-raiser was taking his talents elsewhere, relief that an

administrator who seemed to have better relations with the alumni and the mayor of New Haven than with his faculty and students was calling it quits. In educational circles, the reaction to Whittle's plan to open two hundred private schools in 1996 was also divided: almost everyone assumed his venture would be successful, and a great many professionals seemed to think that it would be yet another blow to our archaic, ineffective, practically unmanageable public-school system.

"Benign neglect is at the core of this idea," charges Herbert Kohl, the veteran school reformer. "This is pure Reagan-Bush: neglect the issues, build a bypass around the problem, create something that may be wonderful for white kids. And, of course, make a fortune."

For Schmidt, whose father invested for Jock Whitney and invented the phrase "venture capital," the prospects of a salary which may be as high as $800,000 to $1 million and a healthy chunk of equity are not compelling reasons to leave Yale. Idealism is. So is the changing nature of university presidencies; six years as the leader of an archaic, ineffective, practically unmanageable enterprise like Yale may be all anyone can take. Two weeks after Schmidt's bombshell, Michael Sovern, president of Columbia University, announced his resignation. "One might ask the question not why am I leaving now," he mused, "but why did I stay so long?"

And then there's the Whittle-Perot factor.

Whittle, like Perot, stands for high principles that you can't really argue with. Public education *is* a mess, and it keeps getting worse. Schools are perceived by students and educators alike as both dangerous and boring—a deadly combination. Forty-four percent of Boston's high-school students drop out before graduation; in New York, one of every five high-school students skips classes on any given day. In one Houston elementary school, half the students had to repeat a grade; in New Orleans, where a high-school principal demanded that parents pick up their children's report cards, 70 percent of those cards went unclaimed. Worse, as test scores plummet, so do school budgets.

Who will turn the mess around? Not "the education president." So far, George Bush's biggest educational initiative has been to present a "voucher" plan that would allow parents to choose their children's schools. Education Secretary Lamar Alexander was booed when he championed this notion at a meeting of the American Federation of Teachers last year—his audience saw this as one more way white parents would move their kids out of multiracial schools. The only people who seem to be doing anything constructive about reforming public education are individual teachers and administrators who make up an underfinanced grass-roots movement.

When government pulls back, business sees opportunity. Already, a Minneapolis company called Education Alternatives Inc.—headed by a former public-school superintendent—has won contracts to run selected public schools in three cities. Elsewhere, the boundary between civic good and the bottom line is less distinct than ever; two weeks before Schmidt publicly cast his lot with Whittle, Penn State University said "Uh-Huh!" to Pepsi-Cola, signing a $14 million contract that makes Pepsi the official soft drink on its twenty-one campuses until 2002. The trend is clear: services long thought to be the responsibility of the government are, increasingly, for sale.

The Schmidt hiring has, for the moment, obscured that unsettling reality; the initial questions spawned by the Edison Project have been about policy and educational issues. It costs about $5,500 for a public school to educate a child for a year, exactly what Whittle intends to charge. At a time when even high-income parents are straining to pay tuition at elite private schools, does he really believe there are large numbers of parents willing to pony up for what they can get for free? Or is he counting on the enactment of the Bush administration's voucher plan—does his enterprise depend on the transfer of public money? If so, his promise to give scholarships to 20 percent of his students is of less import than the wholesale flight from public education that his schools might inspire.

The educational questions are just as thorny. The cure for bad teachers is good teachers—and good teachers cost money. In order to raise the $2.5 billion he needs to build his first two hundred schools, Whittle is looking for capital from some of America's biggest computer and software companies; they might back his latest scheme in order to be named his sole suppliers of interactive technology and educational software. Inevitably, that leads to some form of electronic classroom. But even with vouchers, how will Whittle provide each student with an expensive "learning partner"—a computer, a video-playback unit, maybe even a fax machine—without cutting back heavily on salaries? Will a Whittle classroom be fifty kids plugged into hardware, with sporadic teacher visits? And who will determine the electronic curriculum: the Whittle experts, the corporate creators of the software, or the local teachers and administrators?

It is Chris Whittle's good fortune that the debate about public-private issues and technology-driven schools has, so far, drowned out the realization that success here might make him the next Steve Jobs or Bill Gates. But it's too simple to say that money is all that lures him; there's also unprecedented power for Whittle if this enterprise takes off. For if the



Schmidt at Yale's commencement exercises on May 25; his surprise resignation came a day later.

PHOTOGRAPHS: LEFT, BY JOHN CHIASSON; RIGHT, BY KEN KERBS

Edison Project achieves his dream of creating one thousand schools by the millennium, he and his corporate partners will control not just the technology that runs these schools but the lessons and values that are taught to legions of students.

If Channel One is any precedent, this isn't reassuring. In addition to commercials that are, on occasion, overtly anti-education ("Students in many foreign countries go to school on Saturday and Sunday—*suckers*"), its "news features" are at least as concerned with soft stories about teen getting-and-spending and life-styles as they are about current events. In a recent study commissioned by Whittle, students who watched Channel One regularly were able to answer only one more question correctly on a thirty-item test than students who were not exposed to this educational "advantage." On the other hand, Whittle says his advertising rates are going from $150,000 for a thirty-second spot to $200,000. So critics and parents alike are right to worry that the Edison schools may well represent the realization of an Orwellian fear: a handful of corporations turning our children not into more educated citizens but better-informed consumers.

Very little of this, of course, comes to the surface in interviews with Whittle and Schmidt.

"I had absolutely planned to run for office in Tennessee in 1994," says Whittle, who's forty-four. "I'd been trying to decide between a race for governor and senator. When Edison came along, I made a conscious decision between education and politics. In terms of serving, I thought this was a better thing to do—and I thought I'd be better at it."

"We have a system of higher education that's rightly regarded as the best in the world, but the foundations are genuinely crumbling, with potentially catastrophic results for our ability to function as a democracy," the fifty-year-old Schmidt told me. "Education in this country needs radical revolution, not reform in the usual way. You don't know how uncharacteristic that is for me to say. Five years ago, I never would have been persuaded to do this. But then I look at Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and the changes in social and political thought that are sweeping the world. And I think about the fact that never in my lifetime have Americans been so ready to question the wisdom of inherited processes and institutions. And I have to conclude that those changes have, in some deep sense, informed this choice."

If they're as sincere as they sound, how can anyone not applaud their effort? But is Whittle—described by one and all as "the world's greatest salesman"—really a believer in the dream of a better school system or just enamored of its potential to catapult him to the kind of national prominence that might make him the next Perot? Is Schmidt—who was, for better or worse, Yale's first president who seemed more like a C.E.O. than an educator—a convert to an attainable dream or a sucker for a brilliant sales pitch? Is this a story of great ideas appearing at just the right time, or is it just another tale of careerism and unregulated opportunism: eighties greed overlaid with sixties spirit and nineties buzzwords?

Kingman Brewster Jr., an eleventh-generation *Mayflower* descendant, was the last sleek Old Blue president. He'd graduated cum laude from the college, where his class voted him the man "who had done the most for Yale." In his fourteen years as its president, he earned that description again; he was solicitous of student and faculty opinion, knew your name if you happened along as he walked his dog, and never pretended to be a scholar. In 1970, when Black Panthers were being tried in New Haven, he prevented street-fighting when he said, in his official capacity, "I am skeptical of the ability of black revolutionaries to achieve a fair trial anywhere in the United States." Three thousand students signed a petition praising him; alumni support ran four-to-one. Eight years later, the judge who had issued the arrest warrant for Bobby Seale delivered the ultimate verdict: "Brewster saved Yale and New Haven from a holocaust that would have made Kent State look like a Sunday picnic."

After Hanna Holborn Gray's interim year came A. Bartlett Giamatti. He too had graduated from Yale, and he'd never left; he had earned his Ph.D. there, become a professor at thirty-three, and was, at forty, the youngest Yale president in almost two hundred years. Giamatti was a magnificent orator, writer, and editor; not only could he turn bons mots with ease, he also found time during his eight-year presidency to produce two books. And yet he had the common touch. In conversation, he was always "Bart." He liked to mingle with the kids on Halloween, and at football games he sometimes led the band. No doubt about it, Giamatti was loved. When he left Yale, all that made it tolerable for his many friends was that he was going to be commissioner of baseball, his dream job; when he died, at fifty-one, the mourning at Yale was wrenching.

As is customary in academia, Giamatti gave Yale a year's notice. A search committee was organized, with Cyrus Vance as its head. The committee quickly fixed upon Schmidt. He had gone to Yale College—"with greater joy than wisdom," he later admitted. That's a euphemism. "Benno wasn't destined for greatness," a college friend reports. "He was a guy with crinkly eyes, a nice smile, and a hockey stick." But at Yale Law, Schmidt caught fire; when he graduated, he clerked for Earl Warren, chief justice of the Supreme Court, and then began to make a name for himself as a constitutional scholar. In 1984 he was appointed dean of the Columbia University law school, where he promptly raised a record-breaking $9 million. Two years later, the energetic, boyish, tough, and very well-connected Schmidt was, at forty-three, tapped to lead his alma mater.

Yale embraced Schmidt warmly, but he didn't seem to return the embrace. His third wife, Helen Whitney, had a career as a filmmaker and a child to mother in New York; she had no intention of living in New Haven. The search committee, many of whom lived in New York, understood the strains of two-career marriages. Yale didn't. Mary Brewster had been an extraordinary hostess and partner—Kingman's "unsecret weapon," a Yale administrator once noted. At Yale receptions, Toni Giamatti stood by her man. But Helen Whitney, it turned out, saw herself more as an intellectual collaborator than as an arm piece. This became clear when inaugural invitations went out for a reception honoring "President and

Mrs. Benno C. Schmidt Jr.'' These had to be hastily amended. ''They realized that they had originally listed someone who does not exist,'' Schmidt told *The New York Times*.

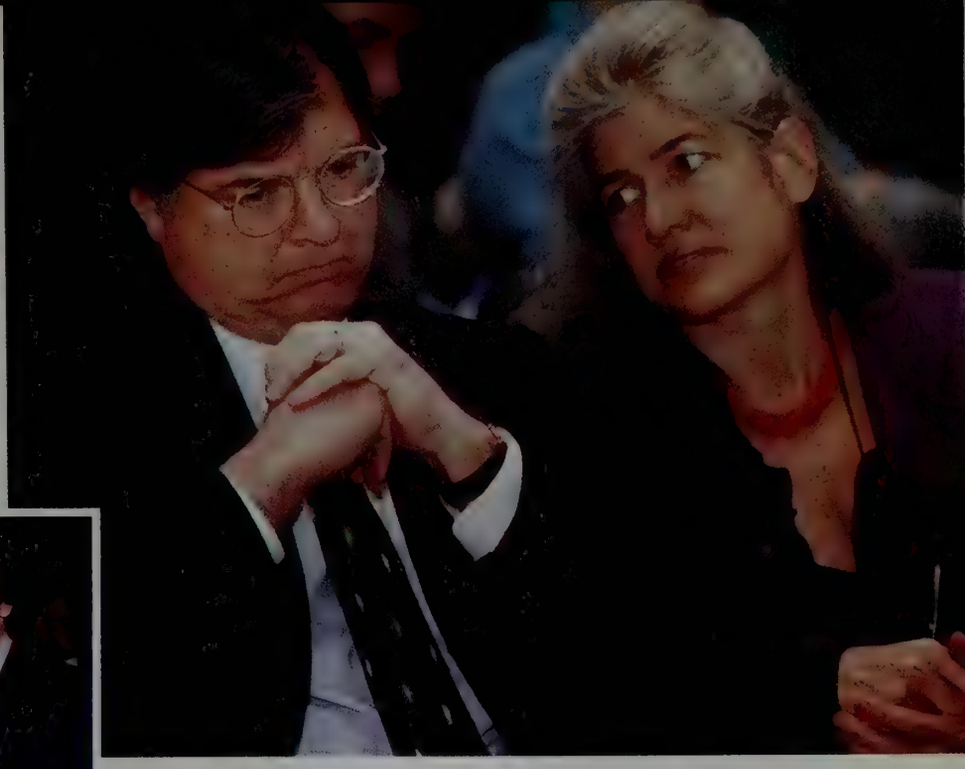
Over the years, he says, ''many students told me Helen was a good role model and that they admired her independence.'' Still, right from his inaugural address, Schmidt was at odds with some of his faculty. For one thing, he spoke of literature in moral terms. ''He threw the gauntlet down on deconstruction, a way of looking at literature that's somewhere between pernicious and ludicrous,'' his wife says. ''Literature is *not* a linguistic predicament, and Benno had the courage to say that. It needed to be done—and at Yale, where deconstruction is king, he paid the price.''



His later speeches, though just as pointed, were less effective. When he'd moderated a PBS series about the Constitution, *The Washington Post*'s Tom Shales had praised his ''ability to be succinct.'' Somehow, he lost that gift in New Haven. ''Benno's a god-awful speaker who takes an hour to communicate what could be said in five minutes,'' a senior professor says. ''He lost the faculty partly because of his style—he reported to people who make their living by talking, and treated them like kindergartners.''

Worse, students and faculty alike found Schmidt curiously remote. ''Where's Benno?'' they asked, in reference as much to his frequent trips to make fund-raising pitches as to his dual address. They didn't grasp that his job wasn't the same as Brewster's or Giamatti's, that his central concerns were a balanced budget, the long-delayed reconstruction of the crumbling Yale campus, and better town-gown relations. Along the way to successes in each of those areas, he was faced with the kinds of problems his predecessors never had to confront—like a 1987 *Wall Street Journal* piece that labeled Yale a ''gay school'' and the splintering of the campus into narrow interest groups.

In 1990, as the school year ended, Schmidt looked over his budget and decided he needed to make major cutbacks. As he made them, he knew he was in for more hostility. It was at this point that he and his wife went off for their annual weekend with the Victors in the Hamptons.



"Education in this country needs radical revolution, not reform in the usual way," says Schmidt.

Schmidt and his wife, Helen Whitney, *top*. *Above, left*, Whittle and his wife, Priscilla Rattazzi.

Chris Whittle first flirted with a career in media as a sophomore at the University of Tennessee. Prophetically, his enterprise involved education—he and a friend hired graduate students to condense textbooks and sell them, as Time Savers, to their less scholarly classmates. This was his first success, and it encouraged him to target media to narrow age ranges and interest groups.

Knoxville in a Nutshell, funded by loans from family and friends, led a Japanese car company to Whittle and Phillip Moffitt, one of his partners. Could they create a magazine for young adults that would allow the Japanese product to stand out? Whittle could do something even better—he created a magazine sponsored by a single advertiser. Over the years, he and Moffitt made a modest fortune with specialty media of this kind. And then, in 1979, they bought *Esquire*.

Whittle, as publisher, is generally given equal credit with Moffitt, the editor, for saving *Esquire*. That's not the full story. ''Chris came to New York ready to do it all,'' a close friend says. ''But it wasn't happening for him socially. Chris couldn't stand that—his obsession is Getting It Right.''

So, once he had *Esquire* under control, Whittle returned to Knoxville to build the core business. There, he was magic. ''The building was filled with kids publishing obscure magazines, but you could feel the energy,'' *(Continued on page 172)*

PHOTOGRAPHS TOP, BY MARA LAVITT; BOTTOM, BY SONIA MOSKOWITZ

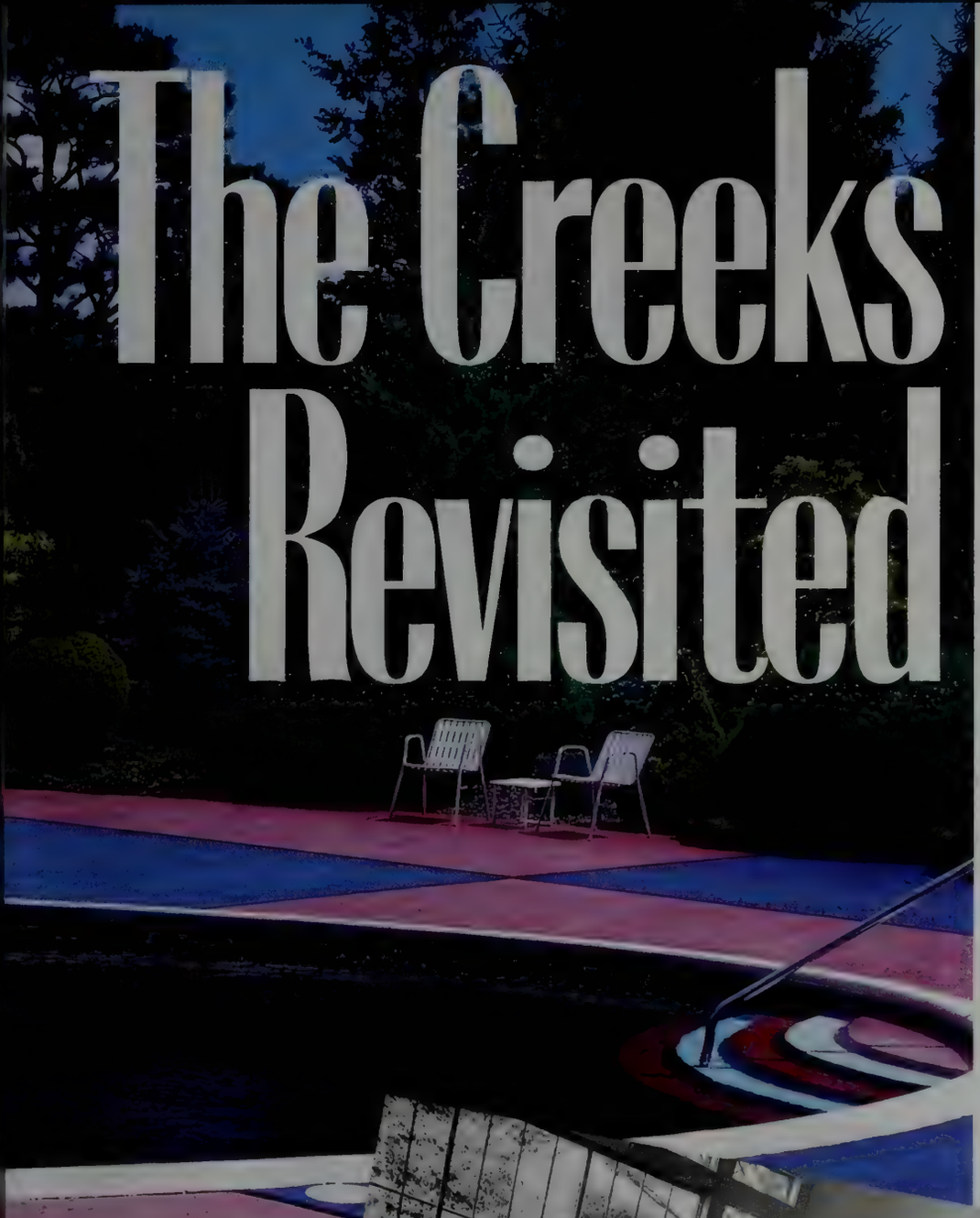


The Creeks' black-bottomed pool. *Inset*, Ossorio, the estate's presiding genius, in 1952 with his own works and paintings by Dubuffet.

The Creeks Revisited

Part William Randolph Hearst, part Andy Warhol, part Morticia Addams, the Creeks was home to dancer Ted Dragon and the late eccentric Alfonso Ossorio—and the scene of some of the best bashes of East Hampton's bohemian past. Now the property is up for sale, for a cool $25 million. ARTHUR LUBOW reports

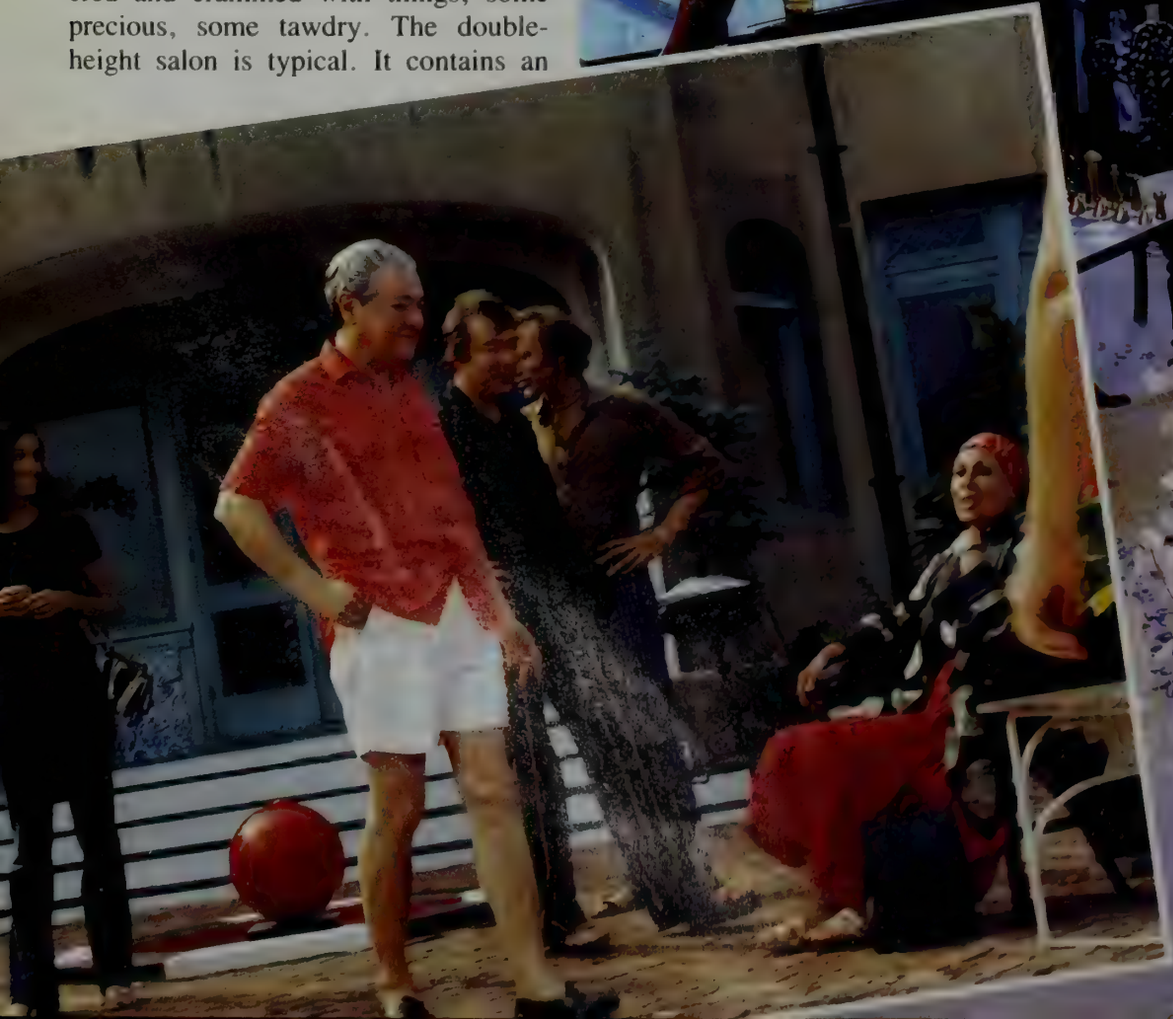
Photographs by ERIC BOMAN

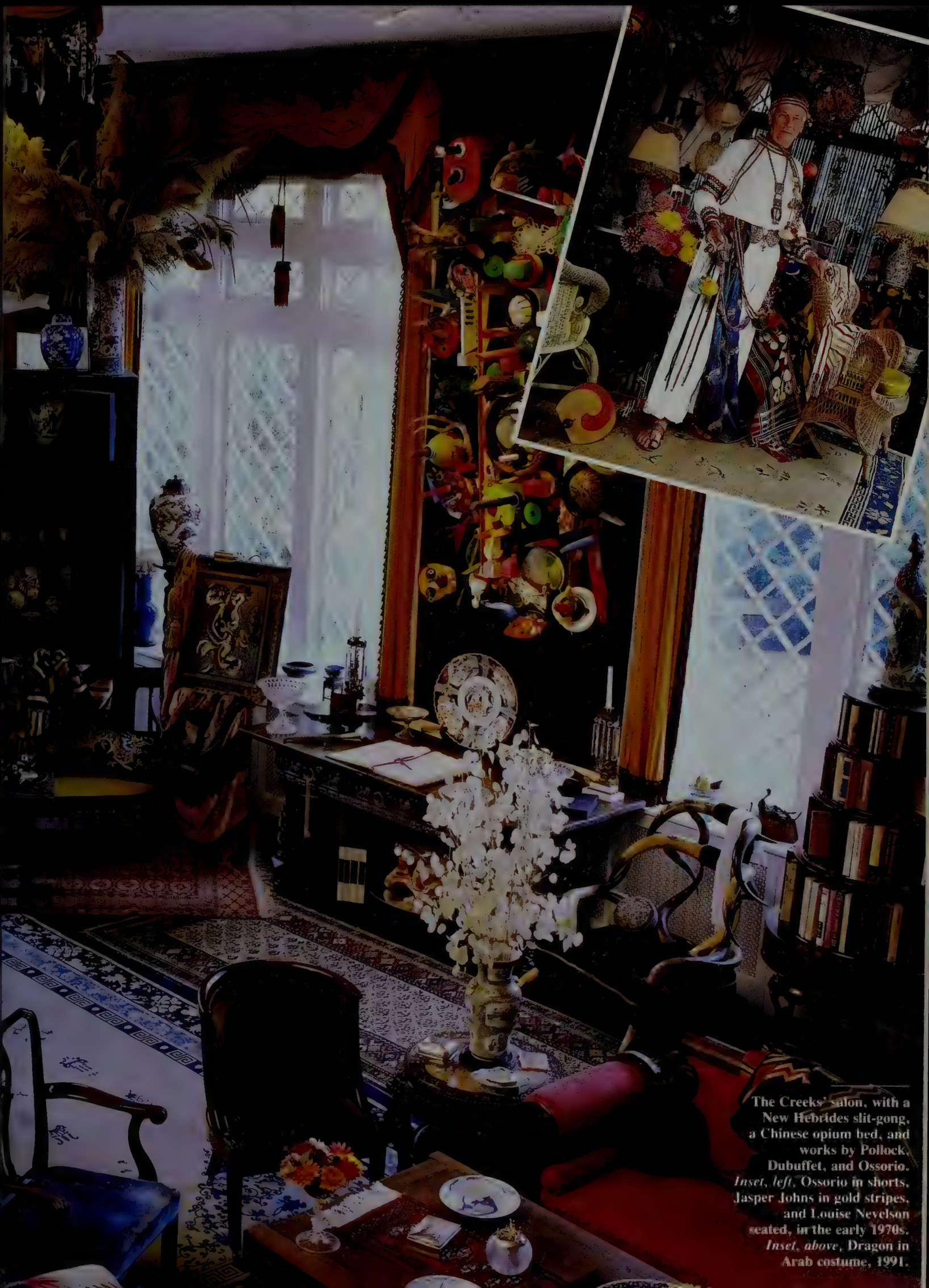




To try to grasp the Creeks, forget for a moment that it is a house—that it is, indeed, the final intact estate from a time when East Hampton was a bucolic Long Island farming and fishing village, not yet devoured by its colony of rich summer people. Imagine instead that this black stucco mansion with its copper-tiled roof, brooding over fifty-seven acres at the head of Georgica Pond (by whose banks Steven Spielberg, Calvin Klein, Arnold Glimcher, and Robert Benton encamp for the summer), is an art object, like Kurt Schwitters' Merzbau. You will be better prepared for the phantasmagoria that assaults you behind the red-and-blue front door. Perhaps, knowing the vagaries of the art market, you will also be more philosophical when you discover that the property is up for sale at an asking price of $25 million.

The Creeks is vertiginous proof that too much is not enough. Taken half as far, it would be vulgar. Instead, it is mind-boggling. Most of the walls inside are black like the exterior stucco, but little wall is visible. The house is covered and crammed with things, some precious, some tawdry. The double-height salon is typical. It contains an





The Creeks' salon, with a New Hebrides slit-gong, a Chinese opium bed, and works by Pollock, Dubuffet, and Ossorio. *Inset, left,* Ossorio in shorts, Jasper Johns in gold stripes, and Louise Nevelson seated, in the early 1970s. *Inset, above,* Dragon in Arab costume, 1991.

eight-foot-high New Hebrides slit-gong, two huge curved tusks, two sawfish snouts on sterling mounts and two tall Venetian lanterns, a piano and a harp, a Texas-longhorn chair draped with African beads, small paintings by Jackson Pollock and Jean Dubuffet, two Chinese bronze dragons, a small Eastlake curio cabinet, an African wooden figure that was a gift from Paul Tillich, a crystal chandelier from a Greek Revival town house in Greenwich Village, and a Chinese opium bed. On one wall is an assemblage by Alfonso Ossorio that, in its juxtaposition of the colorful and the grotesque, rivals the surrounding décor. Until his death at seventy-four from a stroke in December 1990, Ossorio was the presiding genius of this place. On other walls, colorful but far less conspicuous, are needlepoints done by Ted Dragon, Ossorio's companion of forty years and now his sole heir.

They were an odd couple, Alfonso and Ted. Ossorio was a polymath fluent in six languages, with an intimidating facade of lacquered manners. Dragon, a former ballet dancer, is breezy, chatty, and outgoing. Ossorio favored navy blazers or dark suits; Dragon is known for his caftans and elaborate costumes. Alfonso, a lapsed Catholic, would work late into the night, while Ted wakes up at dawn and attends a daily 7:30 A.M. Mass. Ossorio avoided the gay scene, but Dragon has always had a large circle of homosexual friends. "A week would go by and I wouldn't even see him," says Dragon, seventy-one. "We had a very, very good relationship, very healthy. We were both independent. Lovebirds in a cage kill each other. I had two pairs. They will get along beautifully for years. They'll follow each other around, cooing. But one day, one is on the bottom, dead with a cut throat. Then a month later the other one dies of a broken heart."

The Creeks was capacious enough to house two men of varying tastes, and, beyond that, to furnish a backdrop for the modern minuets of a unique community. During the fifties, East Hampton was home to Pollock and Lee Krasner, Willem de Kooning, Clyfford Still, Robert Motherwell, John Little, Clement Greenberg, and Harold Rosenberg. In this artistic capital, the Creeks shone supreme as a gathering spot for the elect. Unlike the other artists, Ossorio was very rich, from a family-owned *(Continued on page 193)*

SPOTLIGHT

Sizzlin' Sherilyn

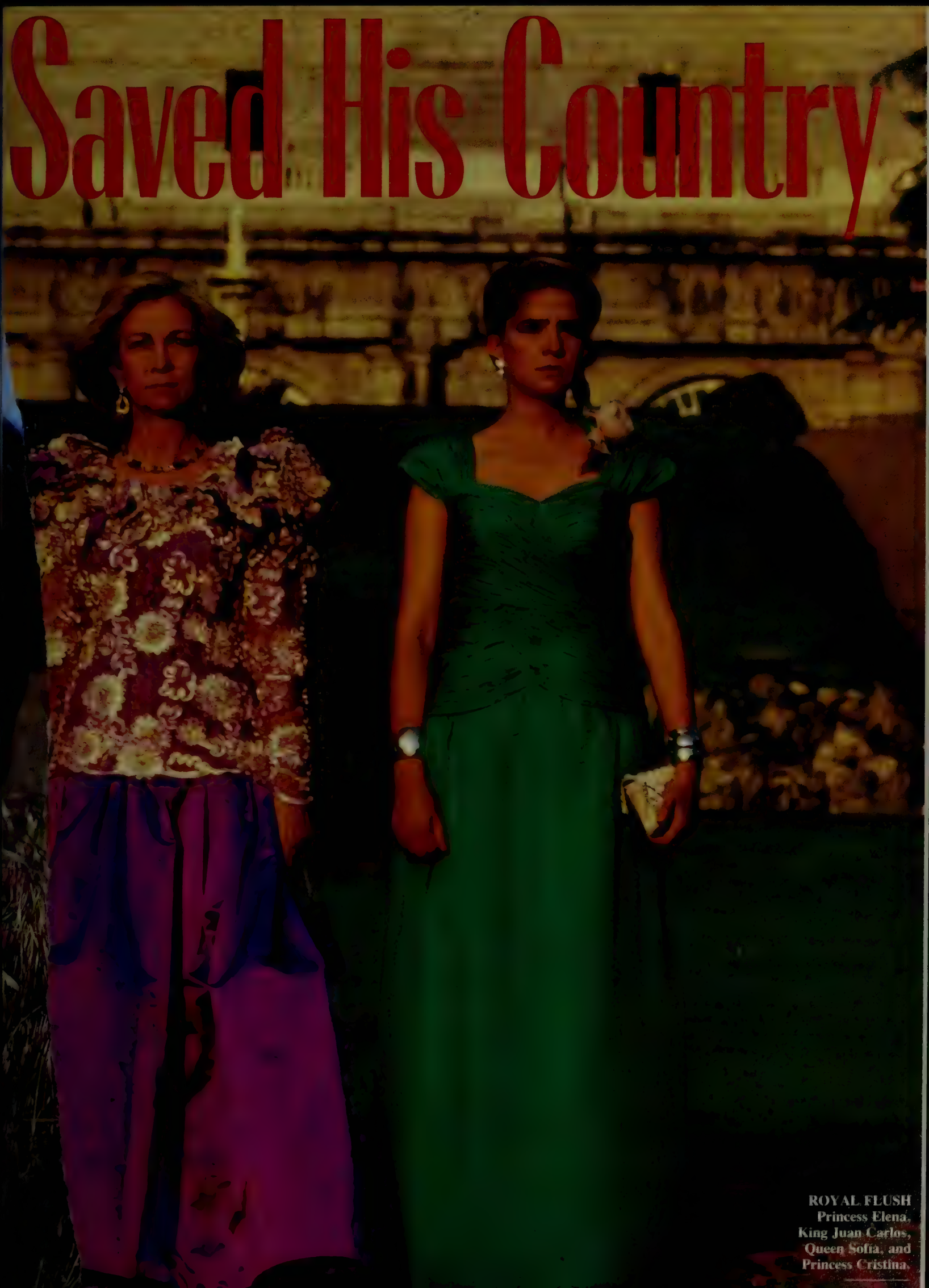
Like a glamour queen of yore (she resembles Jane Russell on a bed of straw in *The Outlaw*), Sherilyn Fenn knows how to shift the produce around. Entering a scene in slow reverse, she stops only when she finds a solid backrest. She then pushes out the top shelf, and pouts. In Gary Sinise's neoclassical, hard-knuckled adaptation of John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* (John Malkovich lisps as the excitable Lennie), Fenn does her most petulant lounging to date. As the only woman on a ranch full of sweaty, shirtless men, she leans against doorframes, fence posts, and trees, making each piece of wood feel special. "It's so *cool* in the barn," she croons, swaying like a breeze. (Malkovich's crossed eyes nearly meet in the middle.) But Fenn isn't a candy cane, as she was on *Twin Peaks*, where she tied a knot in a cherry stem with her tongue, or the recent *Ruby*, where she played a high-class stripper chaperoned by a gulping Danny Aiello. Here she's angling not for cheap feels but for conversation of more than one syllable. Young and fresh, she's *bored* cooped up in the house. She doesn't even have music to soothe the savage breast—her hothead husband done broke all her records. Can't a gal get some attention around here? Until Lennie's big mitts get the best of him, *Of Mice and Men* is the first movie in which Sherilyn Fenn's pinup appeal is employed as a positive life-force rather than a perverse come-on. She keeps her sunny side up. —JAMES WOLCOTT

Photograph by MICHEL COMTE

STYLED BY SUSAN WINGATE HAIR BY SALLY HERSHBERGER FOR VISAGES STYLE MAKEUP BY PAUL STARR FOR PROFILE



Saved His Country



ROYAL FLUSH
Princess Elena, King Juan Carlos, Queen Sofía, and Princess Cristina.

"Yes, it's true," King Juan Carlos answers, "the story about the hitchhiker, the motorcycle, and me."

The way the King of Spain tells it, he had no intention of creating a legend that day—he just felt like taking a spin on his motorbike. So the king put on his helmet, pulled down the visor, and raced down the three-mile driveway of his Zarzuela Palace, burning rubber out onto the freeway.

"Then what happened, sir?" I ask. We're standing under an immense crystal chandelier in an ornate salon. White-coated majordomos are passing watercress sandwiches, smoked-salmon canapés, and silver salvers laden with flutes of champagne and glasses of orange juice. The king grabs some orange juice and tosses it down in one gulp, as if he's really thirsty, not just sipping something to be polite.

"I saw the hitchhiker," says the king, "so I slammed on the brakes. He hopped on behind me and I said to him, 'Where to?'

" 'I've run out of gas,' he told me. 'I've been stranded here for hours.' So I took him to a gas station.

"Actually," the king explains, "I didn't want to take off my helmet when we got there. But he kept saying he wanted to thank me, and asking my name. So I took off my helmet, said 'My name is Juan Carlos,' and shook his hand. He was really quite surprised."

"And then what happened?"

"Nothing," the king answers. "I got back on my bike and continued on my way." Another waiter passes, bearing a tray of the superb jamón serrano, the air-cured ham Spaniards traditionally eat with their fingers. The king's hand darts out and he grabs what, were he not a reigning monarch, might be described as a fistful. This too he wolfs down.

That night at dinner, no one would think of touching food with his hands. A legendarily wealthy and cultivated American lady is hosting a dinner at the Jockey restaurant in Madrid. There are more grandees, marquesses, and other titled eminences than you can shake a stick at, yet it soon becomes evident why the lady has seated me next to her.

"These stories about the Princess of Wales and the King of Spain," she inquires, "are they true?"

Recently, a New York newspaper more notable for its circulation than its accuracy had run the banner headline THE KING & DI. The sweaty innuendo: the King of Spain and the future Queen of England are an item.

Since my hostess is as renowned for her moral probity as for her graciousness, I dutifully set the record straight. Princess Diana, as well as Prince Charles, I explain, is a friend of King Juan Carlos and his wife, Queen Sofía, and visits them often. But that's all they are: friends.

My hostess listens attentively. Then she says, "So you are telling me that there is no truth whatsoever in the allegations the king and the princess are having an affair?"

"None whatsoever," I reply.

"You are absolutely certain?"

"Absolutely."

"Poor Diana," she sighs. "Poor, poor Diana. How terribly unfortunate for her." And then, her Waspy blue eyes flashing like a flamenco dancer's, she adds, "What a man!"

King Juan Carlos is one of those men who men as well as women instantly love: he eats with his fingers, he looks you straight in the eye. He's a motorcyclist, an avid skier, an Olympic-class sailor. With him, there's no regal reserve. And women? When Juan Carlos looks them in the eye, their pupils dilate and their hearts go pitter-patter. They think thoughts that would have made Anaïs Nin blush. Days later, they're still whispering, "What a man!"

The king's charm partly accounts for his immense popularity in Spain, a country with a fierce anti-monarchical tradition. But the royal charisma also obscures the main reason that,







CROWN PRINTS
Eight-year-old Juan with his father, Don Juan; the wedding of Prince Juan Carlos of Spain and Princess Sofía of Greece; Colonel Antonio Tejero, pistol in hand, during the 1981 coup attempt; Juan Carlos amid flamenco dancers at a Spanish Embassy party in 1958.

in Spain, even Marxists and republicans respect him so deeply: Juan Carlos isn't simply a charming man who happens to be king; he's also one of the great heroic figures of modern Spanish history, the person who, more than any other, has made it possible for the 40 million people of his country to lead decent, free, and increasingly prosperous lives.

Simply put, if it weren't for Juan Carlos, the country might not be "the California of Western Europe," as the Spanish proudly call it, but the Yugoslavia of the West. There might have been another Spanish Civil War, just a decade ago, had King Juan Carlos not sped to the rescue of Spain's infant democracy the same way he came to the aid of that stranded motorist on the freeway.

As everyone knows by now, this is the Year of Spain. It's the five-hundredth anniversary of the discovery of America, and also the year Spain, once Western Europe's outcast, is scheduled to join the European Community in creating the world's largest, richest free-trade zone. Half the school kids of Europe, it seems, are taking excursions to Expo '92 Seville this summer. Madrid, not to be left out, has been named Europe's cultural capital for 1992.

And, of course, the Olympics start this month in Barcelona, a national honor that is, like so many events in Spain this year, also a royal-family celebration. Twenty years ago, King Juan Carlos sailed in the Olympics; this year his son, Crown Prince Felipe, will represent his country in the same event. Queen Sofía heads the organizing committee for the Special Olympics, which follow this month's games, and their daughter Princess Cristina, who was a backup on the sailing team in Seoul four years ago, is also helping to organize events for the Special Olympics.

The royal family and their country haven't received so much international attention in years, and Spain hasn't enjoyed such worldwide respect in, literally, centuries. After nearly seventeen years on the throne, Juan Carlos is one of Europe's most respected leaders, crowned or uncrowned. Spain has never been more prosperous either.

The real national symbol in Spain these days is the construction crane. The whole country, even remote villages, is in the midst of a building boom, complete with all the attendant dust, debris, and confusion. The new freeways ringing Barcelona might be in Düsseldorf or L.A. Spain's new bullet train, the AVE, zips down to Seville from Madrid in just two hours and forty-five minutes. And when you get there you find, even in the heart of Andalusia, the consumer society, European-style: McDonald's as well as gastronomic $150 lunches, blank-faced apartment blocks as well as $400-a-night hotel rooms.

A generation ago Spain had a lower average per capita income than Cuba; by many standards it was a Third World country. Today Spain has the seventh or eighth largest G.N.P. in the world and the Spanish peseta has become one of Europe's hardest currencies. "The Spanish have done in ten years what it took the rest of us Europeans thirty years," a French economist says. "They've created a modern democratic technological society."

The Spain of *Carmen* and Ernest Hemingway is still here, but the siesta is a thing of the past. In fact, the only thing more astonishing than the prices (Spaniards now vacation in Switzerland because things are so much less expensive there) is that no one ever seems to sleep. Work starts at nine A.M. and, following a long break for a business lunch, continues until eight, nine, or ten at night. Then comes dinner in Spain. One night in Seville, a crowd including the Duke and Duchess of Segorbe and Henry Kissinger did not sit down to eat until after midnight. When I finally dragged off at two, the streets were still full of people, as though it were early evening.

"When I want to sleep," says Xavier Corberó, the famed Catalan sculptor, "I go to New York."

Goya, Velázquez, Dalí—and Francisco Franco—would scarcely recognize this land of credit cards, skyscrapers, and Benettons. And as Spaniards see it, that's the real reason for turning 1992 into a yearlong fiesta.

"We're a normal country at last!" exults Felipe González, Spain's photogenic prime minister.

"But," I point out, "the next twenty years of your life are going to be much less dramatic than the last twenty years. Won't you be bored?"

"To lead a normal life, to cope with



"The king was ready to die that night, defending the government."



Franco's power to crush their hopes hung over the royal family like a Sword of Damocles.



POWER PLAY
The prince and the caudillo reviewing troops at a 1973 parade commemorating Franco's victory in the Spanish Civil War.

normal problems," the prime minister answers, "these are very exciting things when you are Spanish."

What Spain really is celebrating this year isn't the Olympics, or Expo, or the discovery of America, or the emergence of a unified Europe. The country is celebrating the fact that, only seventeen years after the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco—the dictator who, along with Mussolini and Hitler, incarnated Fascism in Europe—it's as though it had never suffered through a dictatorship at all. For nearly forty years Franco dominated Spain, the bleeding abscess of a nation whose suffering impelled George Orwell to compose *Homage to Catalonia* and Picasso to paint *Guernica*. Many doubted Spain would ever escape his repressive imprint. Yet almost overnight, historically speaking, Spain has become a buzzing democracy of faxes and traffic jams.

"It seems like a century ago that Franco died," says Narcís Serra, Spain's deputy prime minister. "Most days even I find it hard to believe Spain was once so poor and desperate, and afraid."

A journalist who works in Madrid describes Spain's remarkable transition in another way: "When I first got here, Spain was on the crime pages. Now it's in the business section." She adds, "When *Time* and *The New York Times* close their bureaus in a country, you've got to admit things are going right."

That things would go so right, so fast in Spain was something no one imagined possible as recently as 1975, when an enfeebled, eighty-two-year-old Franco was still clinging to life and power. The prince the dictator had chosen to succeed him as Spain's chief of state had the looks and the manner of a bit player in a Viennese operetta, which was only appropriate. For, until Franco died, that was all Juan Carlos was, a student prince. Few doubted he would wind up exiled in a villa in Portugal like his father, Don Juan de Borbón, or living in diminished circumstances in London, as his brother-in-law ex-king Constantine of Greece later would. The politicians in Madrid had already chosen a title for the king-in-waiting: he would be "Juan Carlos the Brief," a hapless transitional figure who would reign only until the monarchy, Franco's Falangism, and all the other vestiges of Spain's violent, bad, and backward past were swept away.

Instead, Juan Carlos became the most powerful man in Spain after Franco's belated death in 1975. And he used that power more astutely—and to greater good—than perhaps any other reigning monarch since his distant cousin King Louis XVI was beheaded during the French Revolution.

"The king orchestrated the transition from dictatorship to constitutional monarchy so adroitly," Javier Tusell, a Madrid university professor, told me, "that people tend to forget just how masterful a performance it was. When Franco died, the king inherited his absolute powers. He could have done anything. Yet he used his absolute powers systematically to strip himself of power—to create a democratic system."



RESCUE TEAM
Juan Carlos and motorcycle on the grounds of Zarzuela Palace.

In Madrid, I asked Prime Minister González to assess the king's role in the establishment of Spanish democracy. "He was absolutely indispensable," González answered quickly. "He still is," he added, citing such delicate matters as Spain's military relations with the United States, and the current controversy over unemployment benefits.

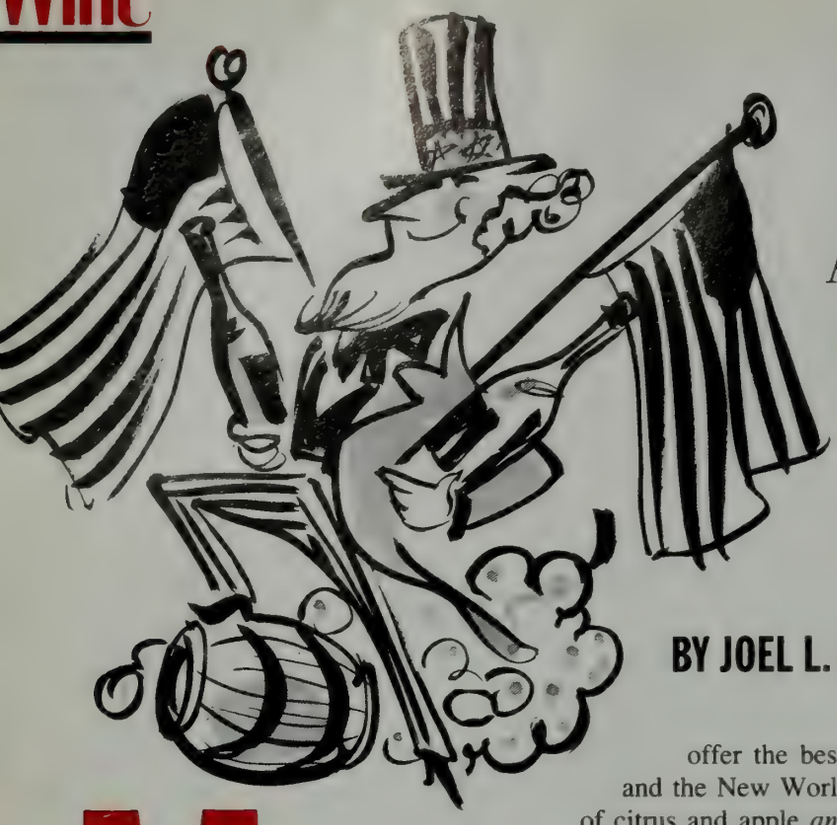
Once a man on the cutting edge of history, Juan Carlos now prefers to play the role of model constitutional monarch, painstakingly referring even the most minor matters to his government for approval. "When the king gives a dinner party in New York," I was told, "he submits the guest list to the Spanish Embassy in Washington. He wishes to be seen as a king who reigns but does not rule."

In a typical twelve-hour workday, the king probably spends three-quarters of his time on ceremonial functions. But these are much more likely to take him to a factory or a rural village than a gilded salon. He and the queen have neither the time nor the inclination for traditional court protocol. And they have no interest at all in hobnobbing with Spain's traditional aristocracy.

"The king spends virtually all of his time with three sorts of people," one titled Spaniard told me rather regretfully. "First, with his family, because when you are king what does status matter? The only thing that really counts is your blood relations. Second, with politicians. Third, the king spends an enormous amount of time with bankers. After all, they are the real grandees these days."

In fact, of all his titles, the one Juan Carlos seems to enjoy most is "Spain's Number-One Salesman." A Spanish industrialist told me, "I have seen him charm foreign investors time after time. Businessmen all over Spain know that if they really need it to clinch a big deal they can call the palace and the king will come."

The emphasis on the king's ceremonial role does not change the fact that he still wields considerable influence over affairs of state. Recently, a friend of mine was visiting Zarzuela Palace when he ran into Felipe González coming out. "He had a bundle of documents under his arm. He clearly had run over to the Zarzuela to get the king's advice on some pressing matter," he told me. "I was surprised to see him, but he was a lot more surprised *(Continued on page 162)*



AMAZING GRAPE

At last, U.S. Chardonnay-makers are producing wines to rival the vintages of the masters of Burgundy

BY JOEL L. FLEISHMAN

More than a month has passed, but my mouth is still celebrating this year's sensational tasting of American Chardonnays. The vintages of 1989 and 1990, from California and elsewhere in the U.S., have produced the most impressive array of dry whites I have ever encountered from any part of the world. In previous tastings, I have been pleased to discover just a few world-class Chardonnays. In this year's collection *more than half* the entrants—some fifty wines—merited the description.

By experimenting with vinification techniques, American wineries have taken the art of Chardonnay-making to levels comparable to those of their venerated Burgundian masters. In the past, for example, the Californians fermented their grapes in stainless-steel tanks, giving their wines clean, tangy fruit flavors. Then many switched to the small oak casks used by the French, producing more complex, oaky, creamy wines—but sacrificing freshness and crispness. Recently, however, innovative American winemakers have begun carefully blending wines made from each process—tank-fermented and barrel-fermented, malolactic and nonmalolactic (secondary malolactic fermentation converts the sour-green-apple malic-acid flavors into less tangy lactic acid). Now skillful vintners can, in a single wine, offer the best of both the Old and the New Worlds, the zesty tang of citrus and apple *and* the richer tones of oak and buttery caramel.

What is equally impressive is that this year's bounty hails not only from Napa, but from all over California. To determine the best of the best, we conducted a blind tasting of eighty-eight wines from the 1988, 1989, and 1990 vintages. Each bottle was sampled three times: upon opening (refrigerated) and twelve and eighteen hours later (at room temperature).

It was a procession of smashing revelations. An astonishing total of eight wines scored at the top of our scale each of the three times they were tasted. Ferrari-Carano's 1989 Alexander Valley (Sonoma, $20) is its best ever, with absolutely firm, intense, and peppery dry lime and sweet oak infused with anise, and a long, dry finish. The 1990 Iron Horse (Sonoma, $18) marks the first time that winery, acclaimed for its sparklers, has ever attained such magnificence in Chardonnay. It is a breathtaking potion of aromatic, lean, and peppery essences of sweet lime, orange, and tobacco. Calera, renowned for offering the greatest American Pinot Noirs, now has an equally impressive Chardonnay, the 1990 Calera Mt. Harlan (San Benito, $30), a strikingly rich, dry, chewy, and prickly sampling of grapefruit, sweet and dry melon, and anise.

Two other wineries made the elite team of all-stars. Sonoma County's Kistler has its most spectacular wines ever in its several 1990s. The Kistler McCrea Vineyard ($28), which received more Best of Tasting votes than any of the other eighty-seven tasted, is lean and mouth-coating, an elixir of crisp apple and spicy lime flavors that are lushly framed with butterscotch. The Kistler Dutton Ranch ($25) is a more austere and drier version, but *very* lime and *very* anise. The Kistler Estate ($32) is an ideal synthesis of sweet and dry lime and caramel. The 1990s of another distinguished Chardonnay producer, Napa's Acacia, are also its best wines ever. Its Marina Vineyard ($19) is redolent of firm, intense spearmint with overtones of sweet oak and melon, while its Carneros ($17) showcases sweet lime, pungent orange, and spicy oak.

Nipping at the heels of the top class was a large group of wines of nearly equal quality. Joseph Phelps finally has a Chardonnay that equals the long sequence of great Cabernets his winery has produced over the last two decades. His 1990 Napa ($17) is a bracing beauty of firm, clean, and fresh sweet and dry grapefruit laced with oak, crowned with a mouth-coating, lingering peppery finish. The 1990 Chalk Hill Sonoma ($15) has lean but focused peppery essences of sweet anise and lime. The 1989 Girard Napa ($16) is loaded with firm, luxuriant aromatic spearmint and tobacco, complex and peppery. Naked Mountain's 1989 Virginia ($14) held its own against the Californians with a blend of oaky orange and lime and prickly anise, wrapped in gossamer butterscotch. The 1990 Silverado Napa ($14) shows rich, sweet apple and tart lemon with a vigorous, refreshing finish. The 1989 El Molino Napa ($30) has chewy, textured flavors of grapefruit and melon laced with caramel. Hanzell's 1989 Sonoma ($25) is packed with sweet apple and cinnamony orange, punctuated with the volatile aroma of anise. And the 1990 Chateau Montelena Napa ($23) is pure sweet and dry spearmint, prickly and aromatic. □

TIM SHEAFFER

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Don't Worry, I'll Protect You: Need a fiercely loyal bodyguard? Nothin' scares me. A bully at school? Grrrrr, let me at 'em. A trip to the dentist? Wait 'til they see these teeth. Lightening and thunder? Ummm, nnnno pppproblem. Call Trouble™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND. **Or meet me at FAO Schwarz.**

I'll Wrap You In Fur: That's what a hug from me is like, soft and warm. Long and luxurious. But, fortunately, very affordable. Call Tucker™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND ☎

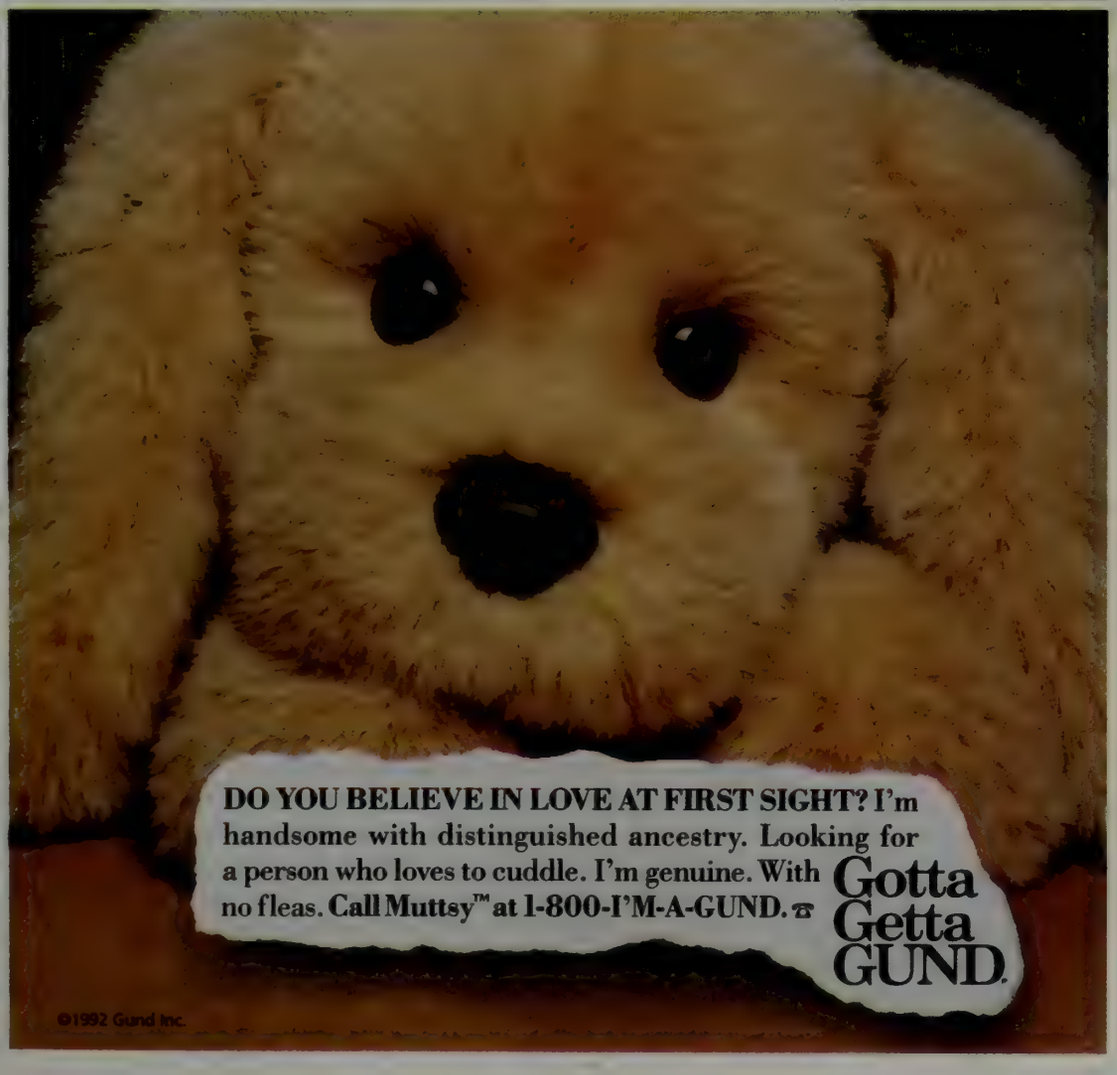
Believe Me, I Ain't Lion: I'm a tiger! With stripes that ripple with my every movement. And big brown piercing eyes. Gees! Come to think of it, even I'd go out with me. Call Kipling™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND. ☎

My Outstanding Features: would fill a cat-a-log. Take for instance my fluffy white coat. You might mistake me for a cloud. But I'll never float away from you. Call Fraidy Cat™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND.☎

Healthy, Non-Smoker Seeks Same: Forget what you've read in fairytales. The only flame in my life will be you. You'll slay me with your sense of humor and expertise at tickling. So stop "dragon" your feet and call me. Call SnapDragon™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND. ☎

You Are My Sunshine: But I'm not just a fair weather friend. My yellow slicker is proof of that. If you'd like to know the forecast for our future: I'll shower you with love. Call Bialosky™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND. ☎

You Have To Kiss A Lot of Frogs: before you meet a prince. So you might as well get started. Pucker up, darlin'. Call Ribbit™ at 1-800-I'M-A-GUND. ☎



The King of Spain

(Continued from page 159) to see me, because this isn't how the system is supposed to work at all. The prime minister is supposed to advise the king, not the other way around. But the fact is that the king is so well connected and respected that people want to use his advice all the time."

The king's populist manner and González's socialist principles have made for a productive marriage. "They like each other," said an associate of the prime minister. "They work well together. But I certainly wouldn't describe them as friends. By instinct, the king is much more free-market-oriented than Felipe. The king likes the idea of lots of people making money, whereas with Felipe's socialist background this is still something of a necessary evil."

"Also, there can't help being an element of rivalry," a González associate told me. "Underneath, in his heart of hearts, I think Felipe would also like to play the ceremonial role, as well as run the government—and, of course, that he can't be. That's what the king does."

Meanwhile, a friend of the king told me, "The king keeps getting more democratic, while the prime minister keeps getting more regal. You have two lives which, while they have intersected fruitfully for many years, keep moving in opposite directions. The prince has grown up to be a commoner, and the commoner a prince. Twenty years from now, I wouldn't be surprised to find Juan Carlos puttering around a marina, scraping barnacles off the bottom of his boat and making himself a sandwich, while Felipe González arrives for a gourmet meal in a chauffeur-driven limousine."

The king's populist principles and his desire to place himself under the law extend to the smallest details. Like all Spanish citizens he carries a laminated identity card with his photo on it, even though it's inconceivable he would not be recognized wherever he goes. Spanish IDs state the bearer's profession, and on his card, Juan Carlos's profession is listed as *funcionario del estado*, "employee of the state."

The Spain of the 1992 Olympics, of Expo and Europe and construction cranes, was born on the night of February 23, 1981, though no one at the time realized it. On the contrary, most citizens feared the country was about to slip back into catastrophe that night—back into the dictatorship they had escaped six years before, into anarchy, or worse, a replay of the Spanish Civil War, when one million people were killed.

At 6:20 that evening, soldiers wearing the funny black cocked hats of the Spanish Guardia Civil, and carrying loaded submachine guns, burst into the 350-member Cortes, the Spanish parliament, while it was voting on a new prime minister. When a government minister ordered the armed invaders to desist, they pistol-whipped him back to his seat. The outgoing prime minister, Adolfo Suárez, stood up to protest, and a soldier shouted, "Sit down, pig!"

The invaders fired into the rococo ceiling of the chamber. As plaster rained down on everyone, members of the Cabinet braced themselves in their seats, ready to die for Spain's new democracy. The rest of the parliament was forced at gunpoint to lie face down on the floor.

The leader of the attack, a mustachioed Franco fanatic named Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Tejero Molina, mounted the podium. Brandishing a pistol, he announced that the Cortes was henceforth abolished, that "a competent military authority" was taking control.

The gunshots; the falling plaster; the hostage legislators; Tejero's banana-republic braggadocio; and all this melodrama unfolding in such an ornate chamber: it was a scene so surreally dark with menace Goya might have painted it. As one report put it, "Never in postwar memory had the democratically elected parliament of any Western nation been subjected to such an outrage."

There was the terrible sense that history was repeating itself—and no one could stop it. The three-year Spanish Civil War had begun in 1936 with a military attack on a civilian government. And now it seemed to be happening all over again. "I was convinced that we would be moved from parliament to a concentration camp," one member of the Cortes said later.

"The worst thing was the lack of information," recalls José María de Areilza, the Count of Motrico and one of the key figures in the post-Franco transition. "The soldiers took all our transistor radios, and cut the telephone lines. We were completely isolated, prisoners. So far as we in the Cortes knew, Spain had become a military dictatorship again."

The coup d'état had been expertly timed. Since a change of government was occurring, the country's entire political leadership was in the Cortes. So all of Spain's democratic leaders were now prisoners—except one, the king himself. But, the plotters were convinced, Juan Carlos was not really a democrat. He had only been pretending to be a constitutional monarch and, they believed, would surely side with the forces of repression if the military gave him the chance.

The plotters had historical precedent on their side: back in 1923, Juan Carlos's grandfather King Alfonso XIII had supported a military coup against Spain's civilian government. The ensuing dictatorship was only the beginning of Spain's, and the royal family's, woes. By 1931 the nation was so violently divided that King Alfonso and his family fled the country lest his continuing presence provoke civil war, which nonetheless broke out five years later. Decades of bitter exile followed: Alfonso died in a Rome hotel suite in 1941; his son and heir, Don Juan de Borbón, bided his time in Estoril, Portugal, vainly hoping to reclaim his father's throne. Juan Carlos, raised in Switzerland and Portugal, would not set foot in Spain until he was ten.

It's often been said of the Bourbon family—which has given both Spain and France some of the most inept kings and queens in history—that they remember everything, while learning nothing. That certainly was what the coup plotters were counting on.

But when the plotters contacted the palace, they received from Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón quite a different response from the one they had expected: "Over my dead body."

That, at the time, was widely said to have been the king's answer. "Actually, it was slightly different," someone who was with the king that night told me. "There was a report Tejero would put one bullet in the body of every member of the Cortes who stood in his way. At which point the king said, 'In that case, they will have to put two bullets in me.' "

"The intellectual key to crushing the coup," another of the king's confidants told me, "which the king grasped very quickly, was arriving at the understanding that the seizure of the Cortes was not the essence of the conspiracy." In fact, Tejero's attack was only the cat's-paw of a larger conspiracy, involving military officers who ranked much higher. "The essence of the conspiracy was to implicate the king in the overthrow of Spanish democracy," he went on, "to use the king to legitimize the seizure of power."

Some people told me it was Queen Sofía who first deduced that the mastermind of the coup was the king's own former military tutor, General Alfonso Armada Comyn. Others credited the current head of the king's household, Sabino Fernández Campo, with understanding the full

dimensions of the plot. But most told me the king himself had figured it out.

The conspirators' plan: While Tejero held parliament hostage, General Armada would take control—or at least seem to take control—of the palace. Then, with both parliament and king under wraps, the commanders of Spain's eleven military regions would proclaim martial law all over the country.

"Once His Majesty understood the exact nature of the conspiracy," said one person, "everything fell into place. He knew what he had to do and he did it. The first thing was to prevent Armada from getting anywhere near the palace. Then, once he was neutralized, to rally the rest of the Spanish armed forces to the cause of democracy."

Before doing anything, however, the king called his father, Don Juan, who was still living in his villa in Estoril, Portugal. The king's father had gone to the movies. Someone rushed to the movie theater, found Don Juan, and drove him home.

"Stay in the palace," Don Juan advised his son. "Hold your ground, whatever the cost. Do not leave under any circumstances—whatever they promise, whatever they threaten. If you give up one inch, all will be lost." (The Spaniard who recounted this saw I was very affected by what he said, and asked why. I answered, "A couple of years ago in Manila, Cory Aquino told me the same thing, when she explained how she puts down coups d'état.")

General Jaime Milans del Bosch, another principal conspirator, had declared martial law in the Valencia region and put tanks in the streets half an hour before Tejero actually seized parliament. Of the remaining ten Spanish regional commanders, only two spontaneously rallied to the defense of Spain's legitimate government—one of them in the faraway Canary Islands. "The generals were sitting on the fence," one person told me. "Had the king wavered for a moment, all would have been lost."

While the reaction of the generals caused anguish, the reaction of Spain's two most important democratic allies, as one person put it, "made the king mad as hell." U.S. secretary of state Alexander Haig dismissed the coup attempt as an "internal affair," as though it were of no concern to the United States if democracy was extinguished in Spain. President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing of France made matters worse, I was told, by offering to send a plane to fly the king and his family out of the country.

"The king was born in exile," one person in the palace that night said. "He is determined to die in Spain. He was ready to die that night, defending his government. He was absolutely resolved never to leave the country, the way his grandfather did."

The king spent hour after hour on the telephone, calling every regional commander directly. In some cases, the sound of the king's voice was sufficient to ensure loyalty. In others, I was told, "very considerable persuasion had to be applied." But within four and a half hours of the attack on the Cortes, the coup had been broken.

There remained, however, the delicate matter of extracting the parliament members from the Cortes alive. Tejero and his soldiers still held Spain's entire elected government hostage.

The fates of two jealous men and the future of Spain depended on this ten-year-old child.

It was time for the king to turn to his next great task: going on TV to prove to the nation that history was not repeating itself, that democracy and the monarchy, united, had faced a great test and prevailed. But supporters of the coup had seized the Madrid television station. "So we waited," one royal friend remembers. "And we waited."

Finally, loyal troops managed to retake the TV station and escort a crew to Zarzuela Palace. It was nearly one A.M.—though, this being Spain, the whole nation was still wide-awake—when the face of King Juan Carlos flashed on the screen.

Every Spaniard who saw the king that night would never forget it. "It was like the Kennedy assassination," a Spanish historian told me, "only in reverse—an unforgettable moment of absolute confidence and joy that remains with you the rest of your life. It was the moment," he said, "when every Spaniard realized: We have a future. Spain is not going to be a failure anymore."

At the height of the drama, the king had called his father. Now, as it ended, he called for his son, the thirteen-year-old infante Felipe. It was past three A.M., I was told, "when Juan Carlos put his arm around his son's shoulder and said, 'Felipe, I want you to remember this moment.' Then the king took the boy, step by step, through everything that had happened. He explained about elections, and how an elected parliament was the representation of the people's will. He explained how the military was the defender of the people—and therefore the greatest treason the military could commit was to turn against the elected representatives of the people.

"Then he explained about the monarchy. He told his son that, while the first duty of a king was to serve the people, a king's ultimate duty was to be the people's last defense.

"It was nearly four by the time the king finished," this person continued. "Things had started to calm down. Besides the king, the queen, and Prince Felipe," he said, "there were only a few other people still there. You know," he said, "we all felt terribly privileged, to have been at the king's side that night."

But historians may never know in minute-by-minute detail what happened that night. "The king wants silence," explains a palace insider who was there. "He wants his heroism to be forgotten. When he dies and his son succeeds him, he wants to be remembered as this nice old man who never did much of anything. Because that is what constitutional monarchs are supposed to do."

"Everyone looks around and still can't quite believe we've all come so far, so fast," a ranking Spanish politician told me. "Intellectually I know there will never be another coup d'état. But emotionally? Way back inside me is the feeling: The men with machine guns could come after us again.

"It's the same way with the royal family," he concluded. "No matter how much they know they're loved and respected, there's still that feeling: If we put one step wrong, we could be out on our ears again."

At less uncivilized moments in history, European royalty was simply railroaded out of the country—as happened, literally, to Juan Carlos's portly and nymphomaniac great-great-grandmother, Queen Isa-

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bella II. Sometimes, in moments of exceptional civility, sovereigns are merely voted out of office—as happened to Juan Carlos's wife's brother Constantine of Greece. But lurking not far back in the collective subconscious of every royal family is the memory of the time when the people came to take Great-great-great-grandfather away and chop off his head. Or put the whole family in a basement and shot them all.

Even today, being royal carries with it dangers commoners don't face. Kings and queens are natural targets for terrorists and psychopaths. Though democracy has done more to diminish terrorism in Spain than Franco's secret police ever could—Catalonian nationalism, for instance, is now almost entirely a nonviolent cultural and political movement—there remains the unresolved danger of the Basque separatists. "Every day we live with the knowledge someone may blow us up," Queen Sofía told friends some time ago. This doesn't prevent the royal family from leading much more normal lives than you might expect. When the king's in Barcelona, he often sleeps on his sailboat, guarded by a handful of policemen. The children take commercial flights when they travel, and stay in chain hotels. All of them, including the queen, drive their own cars in Madrid, unescorted.

Just before Spanish TV goes off the air every night, while the national anthem is being played, a royal video flashes onscreen. With quick crosscuts and multiple images, it shows the king, the queen, and their children engaged in a kaleidoscope of official and private pursuits. They ski; they sail. They also study, and listen to people, as well as do things like opening exhibitions and witnessing military reviews. In one part of the royal video the king is seen, in full academic regalia, addressing an academic conclave. In another the family walks together across an open field. Occasionally Prince Felipe glances at his father, or the queen looks at him or one of the children. And the warm smiles they exchange, as they keep moving forward together, seem to say: Aren't we lucky to be able to lead such worthwhile, interesting, happy lives? Hasn't everything turned out surprisingly well?

Prince Juan Carlos of Spain and Princess Sofía of Greece first met as children, and again at a royal wedding in England. Then, in 1959, Juan Carlos and Sofía—along with other eligible princes and princesses—were invited on a Mediterranean cruise. The ship, the yacht of Queen Frederika of Greece, was a royal love boat, the guest list contrived to spark interdynastic romances, and it did. Two years later, in 1961, their May wedding in Athens was the social event of the year in European royal circles.

I asked a relation of the royal family what these two young people had felt about each other when they married.

"She was madly in love with him," I was told.

"And Juan Carlos?"

"He was pleased," this person answered. "He had been brought up to find the right person. She was it."

The *jeunesse dorée* of Spain flew to Athens for the wedding. Like many visitors before them, including Ernest Hemingway, they were astonished at the poverty of the Greek royal family, especially by how small the royal palace was. Royalty had married royalty. But money had not married money. The Spanish and Greek royal families shared a long history of being booted off the throne, and an equally long history of being broke.

When I asked what it was like to be at the wedding, a marchesa I met in Madrid fixed this moment when a future king married a future queen indelibly in the cultural context of its time with a single comment.

"It was the first time I danced the twist," she said. "After the wedding, we all went to nightclubs in Athens and twisted the night away."

"Did Sofía and Juan Carlos dance the twist?" I asked. "Oh, no," she answered. "They stayed at home with their parents. They never would have been permitted to do such a thing."

Following the royal couple's honeymoon in the United States, people started noticing that Prince Juan Carlos and Princess Sofía had distinctly antithetical temperaments. While he was all smiles and warmth, at ease with everyone from gardeners to dukes, she was reserved, emotionally careful. "Very German" was the way she struck people the couple met socially.

Underneath, according to some who knew her well, Sofía was a passionate woman, deeply committed to her husband. But in many ways they had nothing in common. "He loves bullfights," one friend of the royal family told me. "She's a vegetarian. He's very gregarious, and not very deep. She's very deep and not very social. He'll go off with his chauffeur and cook a paella; she doesn't know how to boil water. By instinct he is a sensualist. Her principal pleasures are abstract. Also, she hates sailing and does not share his sense of humor."

The friend tried to think of something they shared. "They both ski, and they have the children, of course."

A person I met in Spain remembered spending a weekend with the newly married couple at a hunting lodge. "At one point," she told me, "Sofía excused herself to go to the bathroom. When she returned, everyone stood up out of respect for royalty—except for her husband. She looked at him, and said very firmly, in German, '*Aufstehen.*' And he did stand up, as he was told."

"Duty," someone else answered when I asked if Queen Sofía was happy. "For her, life is duty—to the country, to the monarchy, to her family. I am not sure happiness is a meaningful question in her case."

But another person confided, "She is very disenchanted with the marriage, and not a happy woman. But now that the children are grown, she is finding many worthwhile things to do—her work in anti-drug programs, her interest in the arts, her cultivation of intellectual circles. In many ways her life is enviable, and the queen never lets herself forget it. She is not one to feel sorry for herself."

"The situation can be summed up simply," another person privy to these matters said. "The king is not faithful to his wife. He never has been faithful to his wife. He sees no reason ever to be faithful to his wife."

He emphasized: "That does not mean he is not totally committed to their marriage. He is. He also deeply respects the queen. They are a perfect professional team, and, besides that, she is probably his best friend."

Someone who knows them both well went further: "The queen may be the single most important person in his life, with the exception of his son. They have stood together during great crises. They enjoy each other's company. They are happy when they are together. It shows.

"But," he added, "Juan Carlos's conception of marriage is dynastic, not romantic. He married her because it was one of the many, many things a future king is required to do. As he sees it, his duties as king, so long as he fulfills them competently, should not prevent him from finding romance wherever and whenever he wants it." Following the birth of their son in 1968, the couple had no more children. It is an unwritten rule in Spanish society that when the king and queen visit they are given separate quarters.

One reason everyone who knows the king dismissed the stories about a liaison

with Princess Diana is that she is not his type. "The king likes lusty wenches," one diplomatic lady informed me, "to enjoy for a night." Like most people willing to discuss these matters, this person considered such liaisons very tactful on the king's part. "He would never let another woman compete with the queen," she said. "He enjoys himself, then goes straight home."

In fact, according to people familiar with the situation, Juan Carlos has had only one serious extramarital affair in thirty years—with a Catalan woman who lives in Majorca, and with whom he is said to have had a son.

"The queen is very patient," I was told when I asked someone to sum things up, "but she demands discretion. This is the bargain they have struck."

For the most part the king complies—though some years ago, during a state visit to Canada, the queen flew home early, reputedly to protest her husband's behavior. On another well-known occasion, angered by the king's activities, she flew to her mother's side in India, taking her son with her. At the end of June, Juan Carlos once again raised eyebrows—including those of his prime minister—by suddenly canceling several important functions and disappearing to Saint-Moritz.

When people tell these tales in Spain, there's none of the sensationalism or ill-concealed glee that has accompanied recent reports about the marriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales. Rather, there's respect for the fact that two such different people, in such an abnormal situation, have managed to stay together, work together, and live together in this partnership for so many years.

"No one knows what they're getting into when they marry," one person concluded. "Then multiply all the problems of marriage by a thousand, because of their official positions. Most people think the king and queen have done very well, considering the circumstances."

One way to understand royalty is to think of it as a franchise operation, like a high-class McDonald's. Beginning in the eighteenth century, but especially during the nineteenth century, the empires of Europe started giving way to a new system of independent nation-states. Republicanism was still in great disfavor, following the French Revolution. So in order to win the great powers' recognition, these young nations had to become kingdoms—and to be a kingdom you needed a king.

As countries like Belgium, Greece, Bulgaria, and Norway gained their independence, a trade in vacant crowns flourished. The younger sons of ruling kings and the nobility of northern Europe shopped around for thrones. The Prince of This or Archduke of That would rattle into a prospective realm in his private railway car. And while he looked over the plumbing in the royal place, his potential subjects scrutinized him. The ideal candidate was a blond, blue-eyed, vapid, but presentable princeling who would confer an aura of genteel legitimacy on state affairs—while behind the scenes, especially in the Balkans, the local warlords and potentates went on looting the country.

If all went smoothly, a trial marriage between king and kingdom would be arranged—after which sovereigns who took their kingship a tad too seriously could be sent packing. This was how Queen Sofía of Spain happened to be born a princess of Greece, though she is almost entirely of Scandinavian and German descent and has not one drop of Greek blood in her veins. In 1862, the Greeks wearied of their Bavarian king, and ran him out. The following year, they awarded their crown to Prince William of Denmark (whose successors were also chased out of the country periodically, until 1973, when Greece's Danish monarchy was abolished by the military government).

There was another way thrones could come onto the market: at times, a royal family succumbed to genetic exhaustion. When Sweden's Vasa dynasty died out, for example, the crown was placed upon the head of a marshal in Napoleon's army, Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, the son of a French lawyer. Juan Carlos's Bourbon family ascended Spain's throne in a similar way—as foreigners taking over a vacant throne. Only through his French ancestors does he descend from the two most famous Spanish sovereigns of all, Ferdinand and Isabella.

The marriage of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in 1469 led to the creation of Europe's first superpower. By 1492 they had expelled the Moors from Granada, uniting all of the Iberian peninsula except Portugal under their rule. The same year, Columbus discovered America, ushering in Spain's "Golden Century." It ended four years short, in 1588, when the "invincible" Spanish Armada disintegrated in the seas off England. The defeat marked the beginning of the end of Spain's world dominance. The country soon degenerated into little more than a dynastic domino.

Through Isabella's daughter, Joan the Mad, a dynastic marriage led to the Habsburgs' holding the throne until 1700, when the last Habsburg king of Spain, Carlos II, died without heirs. Louis XIV, the Bourbon "Sun King" of France and Europe's most powerful monarch, successfully intrigued to have his grandson Philippe, Duke of Anjou, transformed into Felipe V, King of Spain—but only by provoking one of Europe's longest, bitterest conflagrations.

The War of the Spanish Succession, fought from 1701 to 1714, was truly a world war. It convulsed the whole of Europe, and was fought in places as far away as Canada and Brazil. In the end, Spain's French king kept his throne, but only at the cost of bleeding the country white.

Long after the Bourbon dynasty in France was swept away, Louis XIV's descendants continued to rule Spain. For the next 231 years, nine regnant Bourbon kings and queens accumulated a dynastic record of nearly unmitigated disaster, incompetence, scandal, and personal misfortune. Felipe V's accession provoked the country's devastation. His son Ferdinand VI died without heirs. He was succeeded by his half-brother Carlos III, whose son Carlos IV was first forced to abdicate, then outraged Spanish nationalists by ceding his rights to Napoleon—thus helping to provoke the Peninsular War, which again ravaged the whole country.

Disaster struck again when his successor, Ferdinand VII, provoked yet another Spanish war by violating Salic law and making his daughter Isabella, rather than his brother, the successor to the throne. Queen Isabella II, in turn, scandalized the whole of Europe for half a century with her profligacy, intrigues, and promiscuity. She was, as one turn-of-the-century historian breathlessly described her, "the cause, from her birth to the last day of her reign, of civil war, revolutionary movements, bloodshed, cruelty, and incalculable misery to her people."

Her amours still raise genealogical mysteries. Isabella was undoubtedly Juan Carlos's great-great-grandmother. But who was his great-great-grandfather? Historians agree it certainly was not Isabella II's pathetic and effeminate king consort, Don Francisco de Asís de Borbón. Nor was it Carlos Marfori, a strolling minstrel and the son of an Italian cook—who with the queen and king consort later formed a ménage à trois. "Most probably present Spanish royalty descends from different members of the palace guard," one historian told me, "as well as various pages and opera singers. Isabella had eight children. Who exactly the fathers were, we'll never know."

In 1868, Isabella fled the country, leaving the throne vacant and touching off yet

another European crisis over who would reign in Spain—and helping to provoke the Franco-Prussian War. Isabella II nonetheless lived on to see the Bourbons restored to the Spanish throne in the form of her son King Alfonso XII. But misfortune visited the Bourbons again when the intelligent but frail new king died of consumption at age twenty-seven, leaving two daughters and a pregnant wife—plunging Spain, once again, into great constitutional uncertainty. Months after his death, however, a son was born, Alfonso XIII, "the only boy ever born a king."

Despite his auspicious beginning, Alfonso XIII's fate was no sunnier. After he had grown and married, his family was afflicted by one of the most disastrous occupational hazards of ruling families: inherited disease.

Sometime in the mid-nineteenth century, Queen Victoria of England—later known as "the grandmother of Europe" because so many of her daughters married foreign princes—suffered a genetic mutation, guaranteeing that the queen's daughters and granddaughters would transmit hemophilia to many of Europe's royal houses. It's the internal bleeding that makes hemophilia truly horrible. When a hemophiliac cuts his finger, at least the blood flows out. But damage to internal organs produces massive internal bleeding. The lungs, brain, or kidneys drown in blood—causing physical agony and, eventually, death. A curiosity of the disease is that, while only females transmit it, only males are victims. Since, in most countries, only royal sons of royal mothers could ascend the throne, Victoria's daughters and granddaughters were genetic time bombs.

The most famous case is that of the Russian Romanovs, but in Spain this royal curse also struck with devastating results. One of Queen Victoria's daughters, Princess Beatrice of England, passed the disease on to her daughter, who became King Alfonso XIII's wife, Queen Victoria Eugenia of Spain. The Spanish royal couple discovered that their firstborn had hemophilia in a particularly gruesome way—at their son's ritual circumcision, attended by government ministers and nobles of the court. Their second son was a deaf-mute. Then came two daughters.

Finally, in 1913, their only healthy son was born: Juan Carlos's father, Don Juan de Borbón. (A fourth and final son also had hemophilia.) Juan Carlos's father thus only became heir to the throne, and Juan Carlos himself heir apparent, because of the afflictions of Don Juan's two older brothers and the fact that they later married commoners, excluding themselves and their heirs from the line of succession.

"The king and Queen Ena"—as everyone called Queen Victoria Eugenia—"were compelled for dynastic reasons to have child after child," a titled dowager in Madrid told me. "So, over and over, they produced defective sons." She remembered that in the park surrounding the royal palace the trees were wrapped in straw and burlap. "This was so the boys, when they were playing, wouldn't start to bleed if they bumped into the trees."

The youngest boy was only twenty when he died, in a car crash in Austria in 1934. Their oldest son, who normally would have been king, followed four years later; after an auto accident he died in the arms of his last paramour, a cigarette girl he'd met in a nightclub.

By January 1938, when Juan Carlos was born in Italy, the Bourbon family, like Spain itself, seemed to have reached the point of historical bankruptcy. No longer a reigning sovereign, the exiled Alfonso XIII and his family had become ornaments of Fascist society in Mussolini's Rome. Il Duce himself took an interest in the infant Spanish prince; he reputedly was the first to suggest to his fellow Fascist dictator Francisco Franco that he take Juan Carlos's education in hand.

The family lived in Rome, Switzerland, and later Portugal with little or no money. "Hotel managers grew anxious when the royal family checked in," I was told. They depended on handouts from Spanish nobles and others with a stake in the eventual restoration of the monarchy. Each grandee of Spain gave the royal family 25,000 pesetas a year. Today that is $250; even back then it was not a fortune. When his turn came, each donor would show up at the royal villa, often with his wife and children, and move in with the royal family. "They always seemed very glad to see us," remembered the son of one of the benefactors. "Only later did I understand why. It certainly was tactless," he added. "I still wonder: when did my father actually hand over the cash?"

This humiliation, like all the others of those years, the royal family endured, by all accounts, with exemplary grace. Yet when he finally did become king, Juan Carlos systematically broke ties with the Spanish nobility. He and Queen Sofía refused to have a court and continued to live on the outskirts of Madrid in Zarzuela Palace, which is actually just a large house. To this day the traditional residence of Spain's kings, the Palacio del Oriente in central Madrid, is used exclusively for ceremonial functions. And of the hundreds of events he has hosted over the years, Juan Carlos has given exactly one reception for the grandees of Spain.

"Of course the king has individual friends who happen to have titles," a titled woman told me, "but after 1975 he had nothing to do with the nobility as a class. I suppose it was politically necessary. But I still remember the days we played together as children. I'd love to see him again."

While the parents of the infant Juan Carlos were worrying about money, the parents of other Spanish children were watching their sons die in one of the most gruesome civil wars of the twentieth century. In 1936, Francisco Franco launched a military mutiny against the republican government which had prompted Alfonso XIII to leave the country. One of Franco's many contradictory promises was to restore the monarchy.

"Sure, he planned to restore the monarchy," an elderly Spanish monarchist told me, with bitterness still evident more than fifty years later, "but only after he was dead."

When his forces won the war in 1939, Franco made himself Spain's uncrowned king. Even on Spain's coins he was "Caudillo of Spain, by the grace of God." Actually it was by the grace of mass murder and, ultimately, by force of inertia that Franco remained Spain's ruler for the next thirty-six years.

Franco's rule created an exceedingly strange relationship between him and the Spanish royal family. If he had not overthrown the republic, they would have had no chance at all of regaining the throne. But, having won, Franco became the great obstacle to their dream of return. They played a cat-and-mouse game, decade after decade, for Spain's future. And from the beginning, there was no doubt that the Spanish royal family were the mice.

Juan Carlos's grandfather Alfonso XIII at first was certain he would eventually regain the throne. When he died in 1941, at age fifty-four, everyone considered his only healthy male heir, Don Juan, the next King of Spain. A dashing young prince, Don Juan had volunteered to fight on Franco's side during the civil war. But the last thing Franco wanted was a young, royal war hero whose popularity might complicate his own plans for the future. The offer was refused. Don Juan sat out

the Spanish Civil War, as well as World War II, in exile.

By history, heritage, and expediency, the Spanish Bourbons were natural allies of the Axis powers. Living in Rome, the royal family owed its precarious existence to Mussolini and its precarious hopes of regaining the throne to Franco. But after his father died, Don Juan removed himself and his young family from the Fascist orbit—going first to neutral Switzerland, and then, after the Allied victory, to Portugal.

"He foresaw everything," a man who once worked closely with Don Juan told me, "the whole next fifty years: the defeat of Nazism, the triumph of democracy, the emergence of a united Europe, of which Spain must be a part. He understood fifty years ago that the next King of Spain had to be king of all the people. Whether Communists or workers, or professionals or rightists, the king had to be the friend of all, the enemy of none."

There was one thing Don Juan did not foresee: Franco's staying power. Don Juan intended to be Spain's first "king of all the people." But this would never happen. "Franco frustrated him at every step," this person told me, "except one. Don Juan defeated Franco in the battle for the heart and soul of the boy"—"the boy" being Juan Carlos.

"You know," he added, "it's a terribly sad thing to be the son of a king, and the father of a king, but never to be a king yourself."

In exile, Don Juan faced one of those problems royalty faces while other people are starving and dying: what to call himself. To style himself King Juan of Spain would have seemed pretentious and premature. But he had inherited dozens of other titles from his father as well. He finally chose "Count of Barcelona," the title he still uses today. It was his own homage to Catalonia, the sign of his solidarity with Barcelona and all it stood for. Nowhere in Spain had people suffered more in the civil war. During Franco's long domination of the country, nowhere was his authoritarianism more resisted than in Barcelona. By allying himself with Spain's most freedom-loving city, Don Juan allied the monarchical cause with all the forces of modernism that—even before Franco died—had started to create a new Spain.

Don Juan soon went much further. In March 1945, from Switzerland, he denounced Franco's "totalitarian concept of the state," and called for the establishment of a democratic system, based on "the inherent rights of the human being," and guaranteeing all the "corresponding political rights," including not only freedom of expression but also a just distribution of wealth.

In his "Lausanne Manifesto," as it subsequently was called, Don Juan went on to say that Franco's repressive system was "in flagrant and dangerous opposition to all the political and economic trends of our time." Then, even more remarkably, Don Juan "solemnly" called on Generalissimo Franco to "abandon power" and let an orderly transition to democracy begin.

"The Lausanne Manifesto was a remarkable document—in many ways the first-draft charter of Spain's present democracy," according to the Count of Sert, a Barcelona-based writer and analyst of the monarchy. "Intellectually it was decades ahead of its time, especially in its emphasis on human rights. Even into the eighties, Spanish political discourse was dominated by Fascists and Marxists. But that far back Don Juan knew both were wrong."

> Juan Carlos, says a friend, "uses his charm coldly, as a political tool."

The manifesto was also carefully timed. By March 1945, Mussolini was dead and Hitler only a month away from suicide. Surely, in their hour of total victory, the Allies would not neglect to sweep from power Europe's last major Fascist dictatorship?

To the contrary, Spanish democracy and the monarchical cause soon became two of the more curious victims of the McCarthy era. Franco would rule Spain for another thirty years, largely because the United States began to look upon him less as a Fascist tyrant than as a reliable anti-Communist. Ironically, at the other end of the Mediterranean, the Cold War produced the opposite result. There the monarchy was under attack by Communist-backed guerrillas. So the U.S. flew to the rescue of the Greek government and its unpopular king and queen. The Greek monarchy was saved, making Princess Sofía, years later, a desirable match for Juan Carlos, a prince without a throne.

In August 1948 the dictator and the royal democrat met at sea off San Sebastián, the resort city near the French border. It was a location full of bizarre historical resonances. Here, eighty years earlier, Queen Isabella II—escorted by both her minstrel lover and her king consort—had abandoned Spain. Also on the Spanish-French border, in 1940, Franco and Hitler had met at the moment when the triumph of Fascism seemed irreversible.

The encounter between Don Juan and Franco was equally surreal. Don Juan, a direct descendant of Louis XIV, exemplar of the divine right of kings, was now the advocate of popular democracy. Francisco Franco, the son of a naval paymaster, was the tyrannical defender of the absolutist principle.

In 1940, Franco had kept Hitler waiting half an hour so he could complete his siesta. So unyielding was Franco that the *Führer* later remarked he would prefer to have four teeth pulled than undergo such an ordeal again. But this time it was Franco's turn to be discomfited. As the dictator's large ship and Don Juan's little yacht rendezvoused in the choppy Atlantic, Franco got seasick. Don Juan, an experienced sailor, was in perfect form.

The fact that they were meeting in international waters indicated how deeply these two rivals mistrusted each other. For the exiled Don Juan to have set foot in Franco's Spain—and for Franco to have permitted it—would have implied a mutual acceptance that neither was willing to make.

They were meeting to discuss the future of a ten-year-old boy. Both agreed that, one way or another, young Juan Carlos someday would be King of Spain. Both also agreed that Spain's future king should not grow up a foreigner. Therefore, the boy must go to school in Spain.

By getting Franco to welcome his son and heir into the country, Don Juan had gotten the dictator, more practically than ever before, to commit himself to the restoration of the monarchy. But for Franco this was also an opening gambit worthy of the grand master he was. His strategy: to deny Don Juan the throne by turning his son into the usurper; to make sure Francoism lived even after he himself died by turning Juan Carlos

into Franco's own ideological heir.

The following November—all scrubbed and tidy—Juan Carlos boarded the *Lusitania Express* in Lisbon, accompanied by his younger brother, Alfonso. The next morning he arrived in Madrid to start school, and enter history. The fates of two jealous men and the future of a country he had never seen before depended on this child.

Juan Carlos handled his enormous burden with what would become his trademark charm. "He was so beautiful and kind and friendly," remembered a woman who first met Juan Carlos that year. "And he could waltz! My Lord, how he could waltz!"

In Madrid I met a man who had been Juan Carlos's roommate at school. "It was a great privilege to have known him when we both were so young," he told me. "But what I'm most grateful for is that, by happening to go to school with him, I got such a wonderful education. It changed my life. For example, when we studied biology, we didn't memorize phyla and species. Our teachers took us on field trips to observe plants and animals, firsthand. It was the same way with astronomy and history and literature. We didn't memorize Cervantes and Shakespeare. We were taught to enjoy them. We were encouraged to think, and learn for ourselves. It was the kind of education impossible to get in Spain until very recently."

This was certainly not the Generalissimo's idea of a good education. Back then, Spain was considered Franco's army, its schools his boot camps. The day began with a bugle call, and after the class had sung the praises of Spain and the caudillo, hours of rote learning ensued. But Don Juan had cagily gotten Franco to agree that the selection of teachers and curriculum would be up to the boys' father. From exile in Portugal, Don Juan supervised the creation of an independent school. A dozen or so other boys were invited to study with the two princes. "There was a strong attempt to make the student body representative of Spain as a whole," Juan Carlos's roommate told me, "so the two princes could live with people from different regions and backgrounds. Of course, we all really came from privileged backgrounds, but there was a lot of diversity, and no one got privileged treatment."

When it came to his sons' education, Don Juan did not get his way without a struggle. During that first year in Madrid there were disputes with the Franco entourage. Classes were suspended for a year, then resumed in San Sebastián, where Franco's influence was less direct.

There were other difficulties. "He never had a penny," one of the king's childhood friends told me. "Whenever we went out, the rest of us had to pay."

"Was he embarrassed?" I asked. This person laughed and said, "No. You get used to others picking up the bill very fast."

People tend to be generous to a prince, and from the time he was a youth Juan Carlos received many presents, some of them very expensive. But one day, with especial pride, Juan Carlos showed some friends his new car.

"He demonstrated all the features," I was told. "Several times he mentioned how much it cost. He really loved that car because he'd paid for it himself." This person added, "I never figured out where he got the money."

It's hard to grasp the strangeness of the situation in which Juan Carlos found himself at such an early age. At age ten, he was separated from his parents, a boy without home or family life. His school's curriculum may have been progressive, but in San Sebastián he studied and lived in a palace, and for all the attempts to treat him like a normal student, everyone knew that someday he might be king.

His tutors were stern. "He couldn't go out. Every detail of his life was very strictly supervised," I was told. Each night he would talk for hours on the telephone with his father—as Don Juan, from Portugal, quizzed the boy about the day's activities, no doubt listening very carefully for any hints of Franco's influence.

A number of people I met in Spain asserted that these early years explain both the nature of Juan Carlos's character and his later survival as king. They told me it was as a little boy that he perfected the combination of charm and calculation that still accounts for the king's success today. "Think of the lies he had to tell his father," a friend of the king said. "Think of how he had to dissemble in front of Franco. And he had to do this in a way that made everyone happy."

"Everyone thought of him as a pawn," another person said, "but young children can be very astute at manipulating their elders, and establishing their own agendas."

Sometime during this formative phase of his life, Juan Carlos was given the crucial advice that would guide him through his, and Spain's, most dangerous days. "Sir," one prescient tutor instructed him, "you will have to rule for three years in order to reign for thirty." Though he was supposedly a poor student, this was one lesson the young prince never forgot.

Juan Carlos never got a university degree. Instead, for a year at a time, he attended each of Spain's military academies. During the naval phase of his military education, he sailed around the world on a tall ship, bunking with the other cadets. Sailing remains one of his great passions, and his friendships with officers in key positions later proved essential. "The military knew Juan Carlos, liked him, and trusted him," one of the king's advisers told me. "And he understood the military—their fears, their pride, their shortcomings. Most of all he understood how to make them obey. When the crisis came, this was crucial."

In 1956—as often happens with the Bourbons—an abnormal life was compounded by tragedy. A few people still remember Prince Alfonso. "He was a bright, mischievous boy," I was told. "Had he lived, he would have been a big help to his brother in carrying out the ceremonial duties of the monarchy." Instead, Juan Carlos accidentally killed his younger brother while the two boys were playing with a gun.

Juan Carlos, then eighteen, was despondent and wanted to enter a monastery. Politically and historically, of course, this was impossible. The discipline of religious life would not have suited Juan Carlos well anyway. As soon as he reached adolescence, the future king manifested another enduring characteristic. "He fell in love with many girls," one of those many girls told me. "And many girls fell in love with him."

While still in school, Juan Carlos showed classmates photos of his latest crushes. They were invariably princesses—he already understood what was and wasn't permissible, even in passion. Practically, this limitation was not much of a problem. "After all," observed one of his friends, "there was hardly a woman he did not find attractive. Also, he discovered quite early that sex and marriage are not the same thing."

One of Juan Carlos's first royal infatuations is said to have been with Hélène de Bourbon-Orléans, a distant cousin of his and the daughter of the pretender to the French throne. Then came Princess Maria Gabriella of Savoy, daughter of ex-king Umberto of Italy. This, apparently, was

true love on his part, but she spurned him for a wealthy commoner. "It was all for the best," one Spanish lady assured me. "She was very naughty."

When he finally married, it was to a most proper princess. The future Queen Sofía was attractive and formidably intelligent, a public figure the Spanish people respected immediately and later came to revere. She complemented her husband's athletic appeal with her interest in the arts and academic life; she often drove her own car to a university in Madrid, where she took courses in philosophy. She quickly learned perfect Spanish, though today she still speaks it with the barest trace of a German accent, passed on by her mother, Queen Frederika.

Sofía had another important asset. For the Spanish Bourbons she represented an alliance with that increasing rarity: a royal family with a real throne.

A photo taken in 1969 sums up Juan Carlos's life from his marriage in 1962 until he became king in 1975—the worst thirteen years of his life. It shows him and Generalissimo Franco, both wearing military uniforms. Franco, a frail, tiny old man, stands at the summit of a ceremonial dais in front of a gilded armchair that is so ornate it might be a throne. Juan Carlos stands, at rigid attention, a good six feet away and two steps down.

But look more closely. Juan Carlos is wide-eyed, as if realizing this ceremony was like his whole life now, a living lie. By this time, Juan Carlos was no longer a boy, or even a youth. He was a thirty-one-year-old man. But by the will of the caudillo, if not by the grace of God, Juan Carlos would remain a student prince until he was nearing forty.

After World War II, Franco had raised the royal family's hopes by formally proclaiming Spain a kingdom, as well as allowing Don Juan's sons to be educated in Spain. But in 1947, Franco's rubber-stamp parliament enacted a Law of Succession, which gave Franco the right to name the next King of Spain—but only if he wanted to.

Franco now had the power, if not the right, to bypass Don Juan and his family entirely and bestow the crown on some rival branch of the Bourbon family. He was also free to leave the throne vacant, in which case he would have been succeeded by a regency, a committee of functionaries dedicated to perpetuating the Generalissimo's Fascist state. What if Franco had decided to deny Don Juan's family the throne in perpetuity? "Nothing and no one could have stopped him," said a man who, at various times, was very close to both Franco and Don Juan. "There were many sleepless nights in Estoril."

Franco's power to fulfill or crush their hopes hung over the Spanish royal family like a Sword of Damocles. In this atmosphere of masterfully contrived uncertainty, Prince Juan Carlos had to tread very cautiously around the dictator and his deputies. One misstep could have cost him and his family everything.

Ostensibly, Juan Carlos was learning to be king. But Franco gave him no chance to observe, let alone participate in, the way Spain was ruled. His only real "job" was serving time at various government ministries, the same way he'd earlier studied at the different military academies. This he did with bonhomie and enthusiasm. But Juan Carlos's friendly and open manner aroused only irritation and suspicion within Franco's authoritarian, closed bureaucracy. "In the ministries," I was told, "he was regarded as a pest."

While these were years of doubt and stress for Juan Carlos and his family, they were a time of outright disaster for Sofía's family. In 1964, her father, King Paul, died, leaving the Greek throne to a man who, even more than Juan Carlos, seemed a fairy-tale prince. Younger and perhaps even more handsome than his Spanish brother-in-law, Constantine was also an Olympic sailor—but he won a gold medal. And now he was king.

Constantine's Greek idyll quickly turned into a long nightmare. In 1967 the Greek military launched a coup d'état. Unlike Juan Carlos later, Constantine lacked the will and the power to stop it. For an agonizing eight months, Constantine lived under the thumb of the Greek colonels. Then he made the same error Alfonso XIII had: he fled the country, imagining that, when the colonels finally fell, he would be welcomed back.

It was a foolish miscalculation. Constantine, who had earned the contempt of leftists by not opposing the coup leaders at first, alienated the right by opposing them too late. Today, ex-king Constantine lives in London, a middle-aged man with a great future behind him.

What happened to Constantine, several people told me, cemented the marriage of Juan Carlos and Sofía, and strengthened their resolve during the Franco years and the perilous transition to democracy afterward. "They were absolutely determined that what had happened to his grandfather, and to her brother, would never happen to them and their children," a family friend told me. "So when the coup came in 1981, they were totally united in the struggle, together until the end. That is what makes a marvelous royal marriage—not the sentimental claptrap we commoners find so important."

Don Juan, still living in Portugal, was observing the movements inside Spain closely. More than twenty years younger than Franco, he believed he had time on his side. But now he feared that the dictator, having usurped his throne, had stolen his son. Franco was holding out a most tantalizing and divisive possibility: a restoration of the monarchy with the young Juan Carlos, not his middle-aged father, as king.

"There was a family pact," José María de Areilza, Count of Motrico, told me. "Don Juan would do everything he could and Juan Carlos would do everything he could. Whichever of them actually got to become king would have the other's support.

"They still talked together for hours almost every night," he added. "No one can spend that much time screaming over the telephone."

Whatever the provisions of the agreement between father and son, the emotional tensions became enormous. Kingship raises the normal intergenerational conflict to an affair of state; it makes the clash of paternal pride and youthful ambition into the stuff of which, since time immemorial, historical catastrophe has been made.

There is not the slightest doubt that—much more assiduously than his father ever intended—Juan Carlos kept his side of the bargain. He did do everything he could to become king. And "everything" in those years included toadying up to Franco, and, worse, toadying up to his Fascist beliefs.

Juan Carlos's activities thus raised the specter of double betrayal: betrayal of his father's life ambition as well as his deepest conviction, that the next king must be a democratic "king of all the people."

In 1969, Franco made his move: he offered to name Juan Carlos his successor. Juan Carlos, without consulting his father, accepted instantly.

In order to make his nomination formal, Juan Carlos was required to swear loyalty to the principles of Falangism, Franco's brand of Fascism. This he solemnly, publicly did with no sign of doubt, hesitation, or regret. However, in the course of his investiture, he did murmur to Franco, "I wonder what my father will think?"

Franco—in what he supposed was his

The King of Spain

moment of greatest triumph, the moment when he ensured that Fascism would govern Spain in perpetuity, thanks to his puppet prince—was human consideration itself. "Do not worry, Your Highness," Franco replied gently. "Everything will turn out for the best."

As indeed it did, because, having betrayed his father to become king, Juan Carlos would go on to betray Franco—in order to fulfill his father's ideals of what the kingship, in a new Spain, should be. Don Juan lost the throne, but in the end his principles triumphed, thanks to his son.

The Count of Motrico was with Don Juan at his modest villa in Portugal at the very moment Juan Carlos was wondering what his father's reaction would be. "Don Juan was very subdued and wanted to be alone for a while," Motrico recalls. "He went out on the terrace and stood there. He'd always believed that, in the end, he would be king. Now he understood it would never happen. Finally, he beckoned me. When he spoke, he was unhappy, but not angry. 'This is a very sad day in my life,' he told me. 'But I will never raise my flag against my son.' "

Motrico will always remember what Don Juan said on the terrace that day: "This is the end of me."

It was far from the end of him. After becoming king, Juan Carlos heaped his father with honors, and Don Juan returned to Spain in triumph. But even as all this was happening, Don Juan still had one historical card left to play, which he did with great finesse. He would not raise his flag against his son, but neither would he lower the flag of democracy. Not until he was satisfied that the dictatorship was dismantled and a democratic constitutional system was in place would he renounce his own rights to the throne. Finally, in 1977, at a ceremony in Madrid, Don Juan formally abdicated his claim, making Juan Carlos king by dynastic legitimacy, not just because Franco had chosen him.

Today, Spaniards tell you that the king is loved, the queen is revered—but that Don Juan may be the most deeply respected member of the royal family. "His life is a parable of democratic stoicism," one historian told me. "Don Juan triumphed by subordinating his own ambitions to his principles. For a new democracy, that is an all-important object lesson."

Quite by chance I met Don Juan while I was in Spain. The Spanish Institute, a New York–based organization which promotes cultural and other links between the United States and Spain, was presenting King Juan Carlos with its Gold Medal. The king and his father arrived together. As they reached the door, the king motioned to his father to go in before him. But Don Juan refused. He made his son enter first, as if to say: No, you are the king.

All eyes were on Juan Carlos. Most foreigners there had no idea who this large old man was. Yet though now almost eighty, Don Juan was instantly recognizable from the photos, taken thirty or fifty years ago, I'd seen in history books.

I walked over, and the old man immediately extended his right arm. He shook my hand firmly. He understands English perfectly, though he has been unable to speak since his larynx was removed in a recent operation.

"Sir," I said, "I do not know your country well, but I have been reading a lot of Spanish history lately. I would like you to know I deeply respect the sacrifices you have made for your country."

At the mention of the word "sacrifices," Don Juan reached out again, encircling my upper left arm with his hand and squeezing it tightly. His voiceless lips formed the words "Thank you."

For Juan Carlos, the years after Franco named him his successor were like *Night of the Living Dead*. Every time it seemed that Franco, finally, would loosen his grip on power and life for good, he came staggering back. "Worst of all," one of Juan Carlos's intimates during those years told me, "was living a lie every day."

One of his only weapons was his charm. "His Majesty's charm is genuine," explained someone who knows him well, "not an act. But he also uses his charm coldly, as a political tool. He knows it is very useful that people believe he is less intelligent, and less calculating, than he really is.

"He certainly fooled Franco," this person added. "But then, he's fooled lots of people."

I asked for examples.

"His father. His wife. Me. Many others. But only with the best of intentions!" he added. "And only with the most honorable results."

Some people still claim, however, that Juan Carlos never lived a lie, because he was a simple opportunist—that there was no conflict between his principles and his public pledge to preserve and defend Falangism.

This harsh criticism is refuted not only by the king's later actions on behalf of democracy but also by specific actions during those years. Three years before Franco's death, Henry Ford II visited Spain. The American auto magnate wanted to set up a massive new factory but worried about the taint of dictatorship and the threat of political turmoil after Franco died.

"Juan Carlos spent most of an afternoon with Mr. Ford," I was told. "He explained in great detail exactly what he was going to do after Franco died—how he was going to pilot the country into a new era of democratic stability and economic growth. Ford was so impressed he invested $1 billion in Spain. That was an enormous amount in those days, a decisive opening for the Spanish economy."

It was also a courageous move by Juan Carlos, who knew Franco's security police were always watching him.

The worst period was from July to September 1974. Franco had finally lost his grip. He was hospitalized for more than three months, making Juan Carlos acting chief of state. Many urged him to declare Franco divested of power and take charge right then. But Juan Carlos bided his time, fueling claims that he lacked courage as well as principle.

But even during this tense time, Juan Carlos gave another clear sign of his intentions. Spain's once mighty empire had dwindled to a few godforsaken enclaves on the western African coast. The most desolate and worthless of these was a vast tract of sand called Spanish Sahara. More than half the size of Spain, the territory boasted one-fortieth of a square mile of palm trees. Now Morocco and Mauritania were claiming Spanish Sahara, just the kind of meaningless threat to Spain's military prowess that Franco's generals would have been delighted to fight off to the last hapless conscript.

Juan Carlos flew down to Spanish Sahara, slapped the soldiers on the back, demonstrated to them that he was one hell of a guy—and then told them they'd have to pull out. The military obeyed, just as it would obey him again during the attempted coup six years later.

On November 20, 1975, Franco finally died. Two days later, Juan Carlos was crowned king. Not even fellow royalty was much impressed by the accession of "Juan Carlos the Brief." Among all the world's reigning sovereigns, only Prince Rainier of Monaco and King Hussein of Jordan took the trouble to come to Madrid. They were joined by General Augusto Pinochet. The guests seemed to sum

up the world's assumptions: the new king would turn out to be a café-society monarch or a pawn of the generals—if he wasn't simply overthrown first.

Six years later, when Juan Carlos rode to the rescue of the infant democracy, Spain was a motorbike monarchy. "Today," as one Spaniard remarked to me, "we have a Mercedes monarchy."

Juan Carlos has prospered personally as well. The king's wealth does not come from the state. Spain spends less maintaining the entire institution of the monarchy than Britain spends maintaining the royal yacht, *Britannia*. Juan Carlos, like all Spanish citizens, pays income tax. Last year he sold his own yacht so the money could be used for construction at Zarzuela Palace. Crown Prince Felipe's personal allowance is said to be only $1,000 a month—hardly enough to pay for a couple of lunches and dinners in Madrid these days.

Yet money clearly interests the king, and like much in his life, this interest is rooted in his family's past misfortunes and the experiences of his youth.

"The king's personal financial objective is simple and limited," said one man acquainted with the royal finances. "He wants to guarantee during his own lifetime that his children and his children's children will never know the financial humiliations his parents and grandparents knew.

"No more 25,000-peseta handouts. Ever."

There are some, however, who question the rich friends Juan Carlos uses for his investment advice. "The king knows nothing about money," one person told me, "and he places his trust in people he likes."

Another insider added, "These people love the king so much they want to make a lot of money for him very fast, and this is not wise."

None of the concern about the king's finances ever makes its way into the Spanish press. "We don't publicize the king's private affairs for two reasons," one of Spain's most powerful publishers explained. "First, there's still the sense of fragility. It's only eleven years since the coup—less than seventeen years since Franco died. We all feel we must do nothing to diminish the prestige of the monarchy, because it might be needed to save our freedoms again.

"And second," he said, "these are all good people—the king, the queen, their children. They deserve to be protected. They are entitled to have private lives, and like all Spaniards, they're entitled to provide for their future."

How will Juan Carlos's country provide for its own future? After the yearlong fiesta, what?

"We'll have hangovers; we'll eat leftovers," predicts Xavier Corberó, the artist who designed the official medal for the Barcelona Olympics. "Then we'll get busy cleaning up."

There will be plenty to clean up, if Spain is to consolidate its position as a modern, successful country. The peseta is grossly overvalued; interest rates and unemployment rates are far too high. And some question whether Spain, once inside the European common market—assuming it actually comes about—will have the industries and people to compete.

A truly massive investment in infrastructure is going to help. To cite just one example: Spain's rail system is being rebuilt to match the rest of Europe's. So will the human investments now being made in Spain: next year compulsory education for all Spanish children will be extended by two years, from age fourteen to sixteen, which will produce enormous long-term benefits.

In the medium term, however, look out for lots of naysaying reports datelined Madrid. We'll be told the honeymoon's over, which it will be. Also, there will be stories about the González government losing ground in the polls.

But Spain's biggest problem will be that the Juan Carlos generation has been so successful that there is no successor in sight. Felipe González once boasted that his only serious rival for power was still in high school. This may still be the case. Prime Minister González would like to serve another few years, then go on to something else, perhaps the presidency of the European Community. But there's no viable alternative to the current government so far. At the rate things are going, González may wind up like the king, stuck with the same job for life.

And Juan Carlos? Everyone in Spain predicts that he will sail into ripe old age as gracefully as he's sailed through every storm. They even predict his private life will become more tranquil. "The king is an athlete," one person told me, "in everything. Now, when a man's hobby is making love, this he can continue to do into his sixties and seventies. But when you are a sexual athlete, well, things taper off pretty quickly after fifty. I have reason to believe the queen already has fewer and fewer sleepless nights."

Even his recreational activities are beginning to taper off. As he said to me, wistfully, "I don't get to ride my motorbike much anymore." Now he will undoubtedly turn his attention to a good king's greatest ambition: to pass the crown, preserved, on to the next generation. This simple task has proved nearly impossible for the accursed Bourbon family. Only once in history has a Bourbon king born in Spain been succeeded by a son also born in Spain. For it to happen again will take at least another forty years of stability, growth, democracy, and popular acceptance of the monarchy: since Juan Carlos himself was not born in Spain, only by the accession of a grandson can this dynastic goal be achieved.

This explains the nervous reactions of Juan Carlos and his wife to the amorous adventures of the twenty-four-year-old crown prince. Recently, Felipe raised eyebrows in Spain and made tabloid headlines all over Europe as a result of his friendship with a twenty-seven-year-old woman named Isabel Sartorius.

"She is breathtakingly beautiful and seriously intelligent," a female relation of the king told me over lunch. "No doubt a delightful companion when it comes, shall we say, to inducting the prince into the pleasures of manhood.

"But as a queen? This woman would be a disaster! Not only does she have a past, she is not royal. Oh my heavens," she added, "I shall be late for the bullfights."

Isabel Sartorius is hardly the gutter-snipe she's sometimes portrayed to be. A very distant relation of the royal family, she is the daughter of a Spanish marquis who is now married to a princess of Liechtenstein, and—another sign of just what kind of country Spain now is—her uncle is a left-wing leader in the Cortes. She herself is said to be an accomplished scholar in the fields of international relations and art history.

In an age when even members of the Japanese imperial family marry commoners, it can seem snobbish and silly when people get upset that the crown prince of Spain should be linked to such a woman. Yet many people in Spain are quite upset, and most upset of all, it is said, is Queen Sofía. "The queen saw her own family lose everything in Greece," an intimate of the royal family explained to me. "She knows all too well the grief her husband's family have caused both Spain and themselves as a result of their ill-considered affairs. She is not," he emphasized, "a domineering mother. But there is this sense that everything is still too fragile.

The King of Spain

All his parents' hopes for the future are focused on this one boy."

He added, "Maybe Felipe's son will be able to marry the woman he loves. But, for the moment, this is a luxury Spain cannot afford. Remember, Spain is not England. Every time in this country when something has gone wrong with the succession, thousands of people have been killed."

King Juan Carlos has often expressed sympathy for his son's predicament—which can be summed up by observing that even young men who can't pick their own profession usually get to define themselves through their choices in love and sex. For a crown prince, that's precluded, too—unless he just happens to fall madly in love with an eligible princess.

The exact consequences of the heir to the Spanish throne marrying a commoner are unclear. The Spanish Constitution is silent on the matter. But according to Bourbon-family law and tradition, he who weds a commoner must forsake the throne. At the least, such a marriage would create public controversy, divide the royal family itself—and once again remind everyone in Spain that, for generation after generation, the Bourbons have put their own gratification ahead of the welfare of the country.

The official word in Madrid is that the affair is over, that Prince Felipe is too busy practicing his sailing in Barcelona for the Olympics for such distractions, and that, anyway, Isabel Sartorius has moved to England to pursue her study of art.

The gossip is that he flies to London to see her all the time.

It's commonplace now to say that these are Spain's best days since "the Golden Century," but that misses the point. Under Juan Carlos, the Spanish people have found a new kind of greatness by escaping, finally, the false notion of greatness that tortured Spain for nearly five hundred years.

"I have caused great calamities. I have depopulated provinces and kingdoms. But I did it for the love of Christ and his Holy Mother," Queen Isabella wrote just about the time the conquistadors were beginning their conquest of America. In that quote you have all that was wrong with Spain from Isabella through Franco: the conviction that violence can solve problems, and that doctrines can save nations, let alone souls. King Juan Carlos's achievements are entirely different—as different as today's Spain is from the Spain of the past.

"What a weird thing it is to be king!" a Spanish friend exclaimed at a farewell dinner just before I left the country. "Why do people need them? Why do people agree to be them?"

He went on to answer his own question: "Kings show that all human relationships are based on emotion, not logic. If they're good kings, kings show us that there's more to life than politics or economics or nationhood. They demonstrate that, in some fundamental way, we're all family."

That no doubt will be how Juan Carlos, when the time finally comes, will be remembered in Spain: he took a country riven by war, and traumatized by history, and made it family again.

And his larger place in history?

When the grand accounts of the democratic revolution which swept the world at the end of the twentieth century are written, there will be long chapters on Russia, Eastern Europe, and the fall of the Berlin Wall. History will relate how common people, of the humblest origins, shaped the future with their own hands. But the chapter on Spain will also show that even a direct descendant of Louis XIV can change the world for the better. □

Whittle and Schmidt

(Continued from page 147) a longtime employee recalls. "It all came from Chris. 'Do they still have billboards?' he asked one day. It turned out he hated billboards. 'I'd love to start an interstate radio station to take their place—it would tell you what's happening in each area as you pass through,' he suggested. When he has an idea like that, he'll look at you, and there are sparks in his hair and laser beams coming from his eyes, and you feel his adrenaline in your body. And you go back and tell people that's what you're going to do, and everybody goes, 'God, *yes!*' "

Whittle's real genius, though, was in sales. "I remember a three-day conference we had in 1982," says a former Whittle sales manager. "I had always thought of him as an eccentric, but he taught us how to sell. There was nothing eccentric about his method—it was all based on homework. I saw that Chris does an incredible amount of research before he approaches a prospect. He knows what underwear you've got on, and why; he knows what makes you tick. And it's worth it. This is a business in which most people are in for the quick hit. Not Chris. He wants the relationship, even if it takes him four to six months to get it."

By 1986, Whittle and Moffitt had undergone a bitter, very private divorce. Moffitt sold off *Esquire* and moved to California; Whittle began to prepare for his political and social debut. In 1988 he sold half of Whittle Communications to what would become Time Warner. With $40 million in hand and a limitless future ahead, he married Priscilla Rattazzi, a niece of Gianni Agnelli and the mother of a young child.

"Chris is so ambitious, so determined to do it all and, at the same time, be correct about it—he cares about *everything*," says a friend who has often visited Whittle's New York apartment, with its antimacassars on the chairs, gold on the ceiling, and string quartets after dinner. "Priscilla was comfortable about herself—she didn't give a shit. One look and he knew that was where he wanted to be."

The Whittles soon had a child. One could say that school returned to Whittle's consciousness naturally, with the introduction of children into his life. But his interest in education also dovetailed with his stunningly accurate prediction that the downturn in the magazine business was not a momentary blip. "Home-based media has dramatically declined as an environment for sending advertising messages," he began saying. "Place-based media has other interesting advantages." His basic theory was to bring advertisers directly to readers; now he would bring them directly to students. "There aren't going to be two [television] sets hanging from the ceiling in a classroom," he said. "In place-based media, it's a first-in-wins game."

Channel One, inaugurated in 1989, saw 40 percent of U.S. high schools taking Whittle up on his offer of free technology in just the first twenty-four months. By the time Whittle met Schmidt, he had bought 325,000 television sets and installed five thousand miles of wire in almost eight thousand schools. *The New York Times* estimated potential revenues at $100 million a year, more than double the worth of anything else in Whittle's stable.

The print media, Whittle was inclined to conclude, were going the way of calligraphy.

Soon after he met Whittle, Benno Schmidt was in the throes of the 1990–91 academic year's first economic crisis. Along with dumping water polo and wrestling, he had decided to ax some print media. But killing *The Yale Review* was not shrewd. In protest, novelist John Hersey resigned from a Yale committee, and fifty-six distinguished writers signed a letter denouncing the president's decision. "Schmidt says he canceled the magazine because he found it wasn't contributing to Yale's academic mission," a columnist wrote in the *Yale Daily News*. "What he means is it isn't bringing in money."

Money: to students and faculty alike, cash and not education seemed to be their president's overriding concern. Schmidt was focusing increasingly on Yale's deteriorating campus, which had been built mostly in a single decade and had never been renovated. The Yale community found that an unappealing issue. "There had been almost a Calvinistic pride in Yale's decrepitude, a sense that the glory of the place lay in its intellectual core," an administrator said. The College Council president complained that Schmidt "doesn't have much of a presence on campus."

The president kept his cool, working to revive the *Review* and firing back only after the 1991 school term ended and he found himself in the relative safety of the National Press Club. "I believe universities in the United States are in disarray and difficulty," Schmidt said there. "At most universities these days, including Yale, by and large it is quiet. But the quiet, I think, is the quiet of the storm center."

In the fall of 1991, the storm struck. Schmidt was desperate to reduce Yale's almost $800 million budget and determined to embark on a restoration campaign slated to cost as much as $100 million a year; his opening salvo was to close the freshman cafeteria at dinner—at a protest rally, students ate cake—and cut hours at the third-largest library system in America. Last January, his committee on restructuring called for a 10.7 percent reduction in the faculty, slicing and dicing departments and closing one institute. "During the next five to ten years, Yale University must become a smaller operation," Schmidt's provost told the faculty.

This proposal came at a time when Yale's endowment had, in six years, jumped from $1.4 billion to $2.6 billion—and when Schmidt was well on his way to raising the first $300 million for a historic $1.5 billion capital campaign. Those numbers seemed vast compared with an anticipated deficit of $8.8 million a year. Surely, Schmidt and his administrators were going too far.

"Instead of sending forth a vision of how we could be better, he talked about cutting back," one professor said in disgust. Another approached some trustees he considered sympathetic. "What job can we get Benno?" he asked. The parking-lot talk had faculty wishing Schmidt were closer to the Bush administration—although his ultimate goal was said to be a seat on the Supreme Court, it was thought he might be offered a federal judgeship. "The general feeling was that Benno would conclude the capital campaign in two years, declare victory, and announce his resignation, effective in a year," a disgruntled professor told me.

By that schedule, Schmidt was out of Yale in 1995.

While Schmidt was under siege, Whittle was having a terrific time. He had commissioned ultra-chic designer Peter Marino to do up a new apartment in the Dakota. He was completing a vast office complex in Knoxville and an equally impressive summer home in East Hampton. His critics were keeping him in the news. And he was, at every opportunity, winnowing through the candidates for "founding partners" of the Edison Project.

"Why me?" former *Esquire* editor Lee Eisenberg asked in the summer of 1991.

"Think of this as eight to ten hours of programming to a young audience," Whittle replied. "Think of generating ideas that inform and entertain in several media."

The forty-four-year-old Eisenberg, who has recently fathered two children, suddenly found that education was of immense concern to him. So did Dominique Browning, another *Esquire* veteran, who'd gone on to bring serious reporting to so-called women's subjects at *Newsweek*. John Chubb, the co-author of a book advocating "choice" in public-school selection, was a natural addition, as was Chester Finn Jr., a former assistant U.S. secretary of education, who's an advocate of school vouchers. Nancy Hechinger, who'd worked in Apple's Multimedia Lab, had founded a company that was one of the pioneers in interactive media. Whittle met Sylvia Peters, the African-American principal of a highly regarded Chicago public school, on a television show. Daniel Biederman, president of the Grand Central and 34th Street Partnerships in New York, had spent more than a decade trying to improve public spaces with private money.

The team was set. All Whittle lacked was its leader. But Schmidt was still on the fence. So was his wife. "My initial response to Whittle's offer was that he had a bold, fascinating idea, but this wasn't a good time for Benno to consider it," Helen Whitney says. "I don't mean because of faculty nit-picking or fund-raising or budgets. I just felt that parts of the Yale community hadn't gotten to know Benno. They didn't see his humor, his irreverence, his fierce intellect. They talked about him as 'standoffish'—that's absurd. This is a man who plays bluegrass with students." What Schmidt needed, she felt, was to work through Yale's institutional problems and establish himself as an educator.

But the executive aspects of Schmidt's job predominated. Last March, his provost announced his resignation—given his leadership of the hated restructuring committee, that seemed somewhat less than voluntary. Three weeks later, the dean of Yale College followed suit. The only key administrator slated to stay on with Schmidt for the 1992–93 school year was Judith Rodin, who'd been dean of the graduate school for just a year. Meanwhile, the 1991 murder of Christian Prince—a Yale undergraduate who had been killed just over a block from Schmidt's home—continued to affect the campus. Freshman applications dropped by 1,128; accepted applicants who chose Yale declined from 59 percent to 55.5 percent. And the *Yale Daily News* was hammering away: "The process [Schmidt] initiated to spur fiscal stability seems to be going in circles, and undermining confidence more the longer it goes on."

At the height of the crisis, it is rumored, Schmidt spoke with Vernon Loucks Jr., head of Yale's trustees, and mentioned the Whittle offer. "Take it," Loucks reportedly said.

"A totally, completely false story," says Schmidt. "That rumor is an example of how people create stories for their own delectation." Still, his resignation was such a well-kept secret in New Haven that only Loucks knew about it in advance. For that reason, the Yale community was miffed to discover that, four days before the announcement of Schmidt's departure, a *New York Times* reporter and photographer had been summoned to New Haven to interview Schmidt and Whittle and photograph them in the president's garden. The Edison Project's founding partners also had scant notice. "We found

out three hours before Benno showed up for lunch," one says. "All I knew was that the head of the project was a man."

The media sweep that Whittle coordinated next seemed to take Schmidt very much by surprise. He sounded ill-prepared on *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*. In more extensive forums, he talked passionately about the educational crisis, but said nothing his listeners didn't already know. To some of the Edison team, it seemed curious that Whittle and Schmidt were being so available to the press so early in the development process. But none of the controversy seemed to hurt Whittle. "He *loves* the heat," a friend says. "He'll tell you himself: 'I'm just stirring the pot.' "

Schmidt seemed more vulnerable when I met with him in New York on a weekend afternoon in June. His town house is on one of the less fashionable streets in Carnegie Hill, and there are few frills inside—the water of choice is tap, the stairway carpet is so frayed it threatens to unravel, and the main event in the living room is the piano, on which his eleven-year-old daughter was practicing the "Pathétique." Clearly, the people who live here are animated by ideas, not objects.

In his garden, wearing an old polo shirt and khakis rolled at the ankles, Schmidt said he saw his Yale years not as a series of crises and defeats but as a record of difficult problems and hard-won achievements. He was able to leave, he said, because the capital campaign was ahead of schedule. Labor contracts in New Haven had been signed. The campus renovation had begun. The faculty had agreed to a more modest reduction in size. "I felt a sense of having accomplished a lot and created momentum and a window of calm," he told me. "I could say to a successor, 'I'm not handing you a university in difficulty.' And Chris Whittle is a very persuasive fellow."

On the issues ahead, he is, he said, still in the learning mode. Whittle's critics say the Edison schools can't open without government vouchers. Schmidt disagrees: "The case for this project is much easier to make if you're not diverting funds from the public-school system." Will Channel One be in the Edison Project schools? He doesn't know. Will there really be lots of technology and only an occasional visit from teachers? He can't say. All that's clear to him is that he's taking the biggest chance of his life.

In his office at the Seagram Building a few days later, Chris Whittle had all the certainty that Schmidt lacked. His office environment is organized and burnished: a rolltop desk hides his computer; a silver letter holder designed by Richard Meier is the only visible design element. Unless you count Whittle himself—in his blue suit pants, button-down shirt, signature bow tie, cashmere cardigan, and long hair, he comes across as a figure from a Frank Capra movie, Jimmy Stewart as C.E.O.

If this user-friendly image is a construct, it's brilliantly executed. Once, Whittle was considered enigmatic, even inscrutable. "After eight months," a former girlfriend says, "I still didn't feel I knew him." That description—and lingering charges that he's a snake-oil salesman—stung. Now, as long as you don't press him on forbidden topics like profits and salaries, he welcomes even the most aggressive questioning.

Announcing a chain of schools without a plan, for example, has struck many as somewhat rash—even arrogant. Not at all, says Whittle. "I have a *lot* of ambivalence," he told me. "I'm not paralyzed by it. I work every week with the same therapist I've been seeing since 1980. I see recurring themes. One is that I play on the cusp, which isn't to say on the edge."

If he's eager to proselytize for the Edison Project, perhaps it's because he alone sees no risk. "I wouldn't do this if it were very risky," he said. "Despite what's often said about me, I'm a very conservative financial player." Nor is he much concerned that, for more than a year, he put all his chips on a prospective team leader who kept turning him down. "It was clear to me that this was the most exciting position in American enterprise. We could have our pick. And I mean that literally—we could have gone anywhere in America and said, 'Come do this,' and people would have stood in line. Where else do you get a chance to provide an important social service, go on an enormous adventure, and simultaneously lead the largest business start-up in history?

"Now, if you'd asked me when I started if a college president—much less an Ivy League president—would head this, I'd have said no. Most presidents are very conservative. I couldn't imagine them as change agents. And this was going to be controversial—I learned that from Channel One. Whoever led this would have to be tough as nails and not be afraid to take a position. At Yale, when Benno spoke out against 'political correctness,' he demonstrated that. The fact that he ran a complex institution four times bigger than mine was another plus. But mostly Benno just seemed right."

What else seems right? Critics have suggested that Whittle hopes to make a quantum leap in his net worth by turning the Knoxville area into the next Silicon Valley. "There *is* going to be a Silicon Valley of education, and Knoxville could well be where it's based," he cheerfully admitted. "With Channel One, we've effectively built a national satellite system that will soon have 11,900 dishes in place. In effect, we've built an eight-million-seat system—and we may well double its size. That pipeline becomes a freeway to providers of educational software. I see a link between that pipeline and those providers. And Edison might be one of the big software providers."

Will Channel One be in his schools? "If I have anything to do with it, yes." Does he see further incursions of commercialism? Here, I touched a nerve. "Whittle Communications is no stranger to education. We have provided magazines and posters to schools since 1970, and they included advertising—that was how we funded them—and for twenty years there hasn't been a peep. The idea that I introduced advertising to schools with Channel One, I couldn't believe that. Any walk through schools will tell you that wasn't new." And he jumped up to show me his copy of a *First Reader* published by New Century Catholic Press in 1903 that had ads for Postum and Calumet baking powder in the back.

The charge that he's commercialized schools misses the point, Whittle says; so does the accusation that his schools will make students slaves of technology. The real revolution of the Edison Project, he insists, will be its improved "human dynamics." "Let's not be locked into the standard student-teacher ratios," he told me. "That rigidity—twenty-to-one, thirty-to-one, with the teacher in front—is part of the problem. With technology in place, the idea of 'teacher' will be expanded. Yes, we may have fewer paid teachers. Parents and students may do the great bulk of running the cafeteria—that's a big cost. Kids run McDonald's—why can't they run the cafeteria?" Whittle sees no reason why students shouldn't perform janitorial tasks also. "Critics say, You want kids to work for the school? Well, they clean schools in Japan. I say that by having students work and by getting each parent to give just two hours a week to the school you're giving teachers much more time to meet with kids one-on-one. That's a *radical* improvement right there."

Shaving costs and demanding parent participation are crucial for Whittle; building schools, stocking them with equipment, and developing a curriculum will drain all the capital he can raise. He's not, he insists, counting on the government for anything. "We absolutely must be able to run this business without vouchers," he told me. "You can't raise capital on the basis that the Wisconsin legislature *might* do something."

This point will confound some of Whittle's critics, who see his long-standing friendship with Lamar Alexander, the secretary of education, who was formerly governor of Tennessee, as the linchpin of the Edison venture. "Lamar Alexander's job is to produce vouchers," Herbert Kohl told me. Jonathan Kozol, the author and educational reformer, who has debated Whittle and finds him "an insufferably arrogant snot," goes a step further. Alexander's helping Whittle to get his hands on public money would be, he says, "the pedagogic version of insider trading."

To avoid what Whittle calls "hoopla that would hurt Lamar and us," he hasn't bid—even though "we might be the leading bidder"—for funds the Bush administration is providing for its New American Schools initiative. In 1987, Whittle sold Alexander some much-sought-after stock in Whittle Communications for $10,000; a year later, just before Whittle sold half his interest in the company to what would become Time Warner, he bought the stock back for $330,000. Alexander also made $125,000 as a consultant for *Tennessee Illustrated*, the one magazine Whittle ever edited. After his confirmation as secretary of education, Alexander sold his Knoxville home—purchased about a year before for $570,000—to a Whittle executive for $977,500.

"Lamar received exactly what all the stockholders did," Whittle says. "The Senate committee went over this—and they had every desire to find something—and didn't come up with anything. Anyway, the sequence is all wrong. If I had a master plan, Lamar would make this money after the fact."

But the critical finger pointing at the Alexander-Whittle connection may, like so much of the debate about Whittle's projects, be misdirected. Education isn't funded at the national level; it's a state matter. And at the state level Whittle is a master strategist. His ability to make powerful connections has been one of the singular achievements of Channel One. And that suggests his field team and his well-financed lobbyists might not have much trouble getting state legislators to approve vouchers for the Edison schools.

As it happens, state educational codes prohibit charging public-school students for their education. In some states, parents and prosecutors have argued that forcing children to watch "free" news shows really makes them pay for this equipment. By that logic, local school districts violate state law when they sign up with Whittle. In states with centralized bureaucracies—like New York, which has banned Channel One in public schools, and California, where public schools can sign up for Channel One but get less state funding if they do so—this is a potent argument. (In California, Whittle has so far spent about $600,000 in vain on lawyers and lobbyists. He may need to spend more: the Fort Worth, Texas, school system recently voted to shut out Channel One, and others are poised to do the same.) In states that aren't so rich, Whittle's field operatives have a remarkable record of success.

Perhaps the straitlaced Perot was unhappy to discover that Channel One not only discussed R-rated movies but showed clips from them.

In North Carolina, for example, Whittle's sales force persuaded a small-town school system to sign up for Channel One. The state sued Whittle and the school board—and lost. "Before we got to court, Whittle staged an intense lobbying effort," North Carolina senior deputy attorney general Edwin Speas told me. "He hired one of the largest law firms in the Southeast. They were very successful in changing this from a legislative debate about the use of students for profit to a debate about local control of public schools—and in today's environment, local control is a hot issue. In my opinion, the state supreme court was substantially influenced by Whittle's success in the legislature."

Ross Perot, on the other hand, was not so impressed by Channel One. Early on, he had joined Whittle's board of advisers, but began to reconsider, late last year, when critics of Channel One bombarded him with some of its programs and study guides. Perhaps the straitlaced Perot was unhappy to discover that Channel One not only discussed R-rated movies but showed clips from them. He may also have been displeased to find himself on the back of a teaching guide that had Pee-wee Herman on the cover. In January, although Whittle asked him to hold off, Perot resigned. Whittle finessed his departure by eliminating the entire board of advisers. This is not to say that Perot and Whittle don't value the same executive style. Hamilton Jordan, president of Whittle Books since 1991, has taken a leave to co-manage Perot's campaign.

"If I had five or ten favorite students, Chris would be among them," says Richard Marius, director of Harvard's expository-writing program, as he looks back over his thirty years as a teacher. "I met him in 1965, when he was a freshman at Tennessee and I was teaching there. I never would have called him an intellectual; it was Phil Moffitt who had the trip-hammer intelligence. But what a lovely kid—immensely popular, with a smile that lit up the room. In 1968, I remember, the university refused to let Dick Gregory speak on campus. Eleven of us sued. It was a wild time—I slept with a revolver under my pillow. Chris doesn't like to talk about it now, but as president of the student body, he was very helpful to us."

Whittle's character changed in the intervening years, Marius believes. Success had something to do with it, and isolation from common experience, and, he suspects, a desire to take a proven ability to make money and transform it into Great Works. "Look at his pictures now," he says. "He's somber, serious. It makes me sad; he looks like a stuffy guy pretending to solve the problems of America. And this Edison Project! The president of Yale signing on is like the president of the United States quitting to join the Mafia—such a disappointment, such a loss of civic virtue."

Marius has missed something about Chris Whittle: the last time he had to sell himself directly to his customers was when he ran for student office at Tennes-

Whittle and Schmidt

see. Since then, he's built his empire by changing the rules of the game—getting most other magazines out of doctors' offices so his could reign supreme, keeping most other ad-driven shows off Channel One equipment, delivering his single-advertiser books directly to targeted consumers.

Education's a different proposition. Whittle wants parents to pay him to admit their children to his schools—and then "volunteer" their time as teacher's aides—so he can make a profit; that's not quite the same thing as John F. Kennedy asking Americans to join the Peace Corps. Meanwhile, educators may well become more organized in their resistance to the Edison Project. "He'll see opposition he never imagined," a school reformer says. "Administrators who have taken all his technology will fight any attempt to give public money to private enterprise."

All this suggests that the man who will have to make the Edison Project appealing to the public isn't Schmidt but Whittle. Schmidt we can understand: he's an honorable careerist who responded to mid-life twinges of idealism. Whittle remains mysterious, opaque. If he doesn't become a clearer, less controversial figure before he asks 150,000 parents to commit their children to schools they will have a hard time envisioning, it's completely possible that Benno Schmidt will, once again, have to change jobs to get back into education. □

Barbara Bush

(Continued from page 124) Barbara's friends, remembers that Martha "was gorgeous—tall and skinny and beautiful. Barbara...was pretty, but Martha was *glamour*."

Barbara was far closer to her father, a well-liked, genial man, than to her mother. From these parents, she learned her earliest lessons in gender politics, a model of how moms rule the roost but dads win the popularity contests. "Mother was kind of the glue of the family," says Scott Pierce, "although my dad was the one everybody admired."

By 1941, the year Barbara turned sixteen, Marvin Pierce was nearing the top of McCall Corp., publisher of *McCall's* and *Redbook*, among other magazines. The company's flagship magazine, which his younger daughter read avidly in her dorm room, had by then developed the blueprint of her life. Amid cautionary tales about women who were not humble or kind or careful enough to land and keep a man, ads advised that the goal of life was to tie the knot ("*She's engaged! She's lovely! She uses Pond's!*").

Within weeks of Pearl Harbor, while home from school on Christmas break, Barbara met her destiny. It was at a dance at the Round Hill Club in Greenwich, the kind of tame affair designed so that boys home from Taft and Andover and Deerfield could practice their mating calls on suitable girls home from Miss Porter's and Saint Tim's.

Barbara and George Bush, only sixteen and seventeen years old, locked onto each other with a striking seriousness, an intense mixture of teenage crush and wartime gravity that is almost unimaginable today. Three years would go by before the wedding, but the outcome was never seriously in doubt.

Most of their friends are at a loss when asked what so quickly cemented this couple. The answer often boils down to social class—that they were, as George's redoubtable mother put it, "sensible and well suited to each other."

On her side, there was the glamour of his enlistment, his string-bean handsomeness, his reputation as a big man on the Andover campus. "He was a real catch," emphasizes Posy Clarke. "He was terribly attractive—this young naval officer—and the Bush family was certainly prestigious."

On his side, the most intriguing account comes from his brother Jonathan, who once said, "She was wild about him. And for George, if anyone wants to be wild about him, it's fine with him."

Barbara went—again in Martha's footsteps—to Smith, but even while she attended classes she seemed hardly there at all. "She was different from the rest of us in that her destiny was already fixed," says Margaret Barrett, a roommate. "Her whole life was bound up in [George]." She made plans to return sophomore year but canceled at the last minute, in August, dropping out for good. "I was just interested in George," Barbara has said.

They married, with all the trimmings, while he was home on leave in January 1945. Their plan was that after the war he would take up his education at Yale, and she would take up the life of his young bride. They honeymooned on Sea Island, Georgia, where George dashed off a magisterial bulletin to his sister, Nancy: "Married life exceeds all expectations. Barbara is a fine wife!"

"It was a real storybook romance," says Posy Clarke in wry summary. "They married and went to New Haven, and she worked her tail off the rest of her life."

Meet Mr. and Mrs. Bush, the Wasp patriarch and wife: He is lanky and spare, with sharp bones and a youthful hardness to his jaw, graying but still handsome. She, though, is lined and bowed, snow-topped, spreading at the middle. So unfair, what nature can do to men and women, and what society makes of the results.

By the time George and Barbara Bush reached their early forties, she was conscious of the disparity in their looks. Over time she tried different strategies for dealing with this painful contrast—including, for a while, unsuccessfully dyeing her hair—until finally she settled on a rollicking self-satire that firmly beat observers to the punch.

These days, no one admits to being among the advisers and hangers-on who once carped about her looks (*Can't we do something about Barbara?*). Each and every one of her courtiers understood all along how fabulously refreshing she was. The White House had the power to turn her hair from gray to "silver," and her style from matronly to "natural."

And still, the contrast between her and her husband remains, insistently pointing to another possibility: that she is his picture of Dorian Gray, the one who wears the life they have lived together.

"She's tougher than he is," runs the standard refrain of friends and aides of George and Barbara Bush. For decades, going back almost to the start of their marriage, Barbara bore the hardest parts of this couple's lot.

The division of the burdens was subtle initially, not untypical of family life in the late forties and early fifties. In almost every account of their first years together in Texas, George Bush is out doing and being—starting his own company, raising money back East, enjoying what he would always describe nostalgically as a great adventure. And Barbara is living a parallel life of grinding hard work.

In the first six years of their marriage they moved at least eleven times, first in the service, then to New Haven, and then

out West, into the oil business: from Odessa, Texas, to Huntington Park, California, Bakersfield to Whittier to Ventura to Compton, then back to Texas, where they settled in Midland. Over fourteen years Barbara bore six children: George, Robin, Jeb, Neil, Marvin, and Dorothy.

For long periods Barbara managed the family alone, while George traveled. "I remember Mom saying she spent so many lonely, lonely hours with us kids," the Bushes' daughter Doro told Ann Grimes, author of the book *Running Mates*. "I can understand how she felt. She did it all. She brought us up."

"The kids were much more afraid of their mother than their father, I think," says Susan Morrison, who got to know the family well as a press secretary during the 1980 campaign. "If she said it, it went. And if he said it, maybe there was a way around it." His natural aversion to conflict, his great eagerness to be liked, made him the quintessential good cop; her basic toughness, her acid wit and strong will, made her the perfect disciplinarian.

As with Barbara's parents, Mother was the glue, and Dad was the fun.

To this day, says one who knows the family well, "he uses her to throw some bombs, while he sits back and calms the waters."

The greatest burden of Barbara's young life, though, was the death of her second child, Robin, at the age of three. Here, too, one can see the Bushes dividing roles in a way that assigned Barbara the more painful tasks.

In the spring of 1953, Robin, then the Bushes' only daughter, was diagnosed as having leukemia. "You should take her home, make life as easy as possible for her, and in three weeks' time, she'll be gone," the doctor told the Bushes.

But this was not their style. Instead they flew Robin to New York, where George's uncle was a big wheel at Memorial Hospital, and where doctors from the Sloan-Kettering Institute agreed to treat her aggressively. They managed to gain seven months of life.

At almost exactly the time of Robin's diagnosis George had begun a new business partnership, hugely increasing his business stakes, and the demands of his work presented a welcome escape. It was Barbara who sat with Robin every day in the hospital, she who was a daily witness to her daughter's pain, the torment of treatment with drugs and needles. She laid down the law: no crying in front of the girl, who was not to know how sick she was. Thomas "Lud" Ashley, a Yale friend of George Bush's, was then living in New York and saw a lot of Barbara during the ordeal. "It was the most remarkable performance of that kind I've ever seen," he says. "It took its toll. She was very human later, after the death. But not until then."

Only twenty-eight years old, she was alone when she made the final decision of her daughter's life: while the prognosis was hopeless, the doctors offered a chance to arrest the internal bleeding caused by all the drugs Robin had been given. It was a risky operation, but might buy more time. George, who was on his way to New York, couldn't be reached.

George's uncle advised against the surgery, but Barbara decided to go ahead. Thirty-six years later, she cried when talking to a reporter about this lonely decision. Robin never came out of the operation, though George reached the hospital before she died.

In defining herself solely as a wife and mother, Barbara Bush was like millions of other women of her generation, sold on a romantic vision of domesticity. Even so, she seems to have pursued the whole package more emphatically than most, working at homemaking like the strong-willed woman she is. "Bar was the leader of the pack," says Marion Chambers, a friend from Barbara's Midland years. "She set the example for us." Her children had the best, most elaborate birthday parties in the neighborhood, as well as the most carefully nametagged clothes. Her house was spotless; others felt, in contrast, like slackers.

She ground her teeth at night and smoked Newports by the pack.

Every year, a week before Christmas, she made an elaborate gift of cookies to her friends' children—a decorative packet for each child, containing a differently shaped cookie for each day before Christmas; the idea was to tie it onto the tree so the child could work his or her way toward the big day. She also threw herself into charity work, the hospital, the local women's league.

Above all, her rule was to accommodate her husband. "The one thing she made sure of was that George Bush was comfortable—she's been very clear about that," says Susan Morrison. At first glance this, too, seems an unremarkable policy for a woman of Barbara Bush's generation. But women who have known her in different stages of their married life say that she went even farther to cater to her husband than most of her peers did in their marriages. "She was very thoughtful of him in every way," says Peggy Stanton, who befriended Barbara in the congressional wives' club after Bush was elected to Congress in 1966. "Probably more so than most of us. . . I just remember that she wouldn't impose on him in any way."

George Bush is famously frenetic, "desperate to be in constant motion," in the words of one of his oldest friends, Fitz-Gerald Bemiss. His omnivorous sociability has meant constant hard work for his wife. Peter Teeley, a longtime adviser, says, "Look, he is very boyish in the sense that he would say, 'Let's have fifty people over this weekend, we'll serve 'em so-and-so and so-and-so,' and then not worry about how the food is going to be purchased, and who's going to get it there, and who's going to cook it, and so on. He'd say, 'Well, I've got to go golfing.' Or 'play tennis.' "

Barbara would sometimes grumble about this, but she never seemed to say no. By 1974, when other women were discovering the wounded, angry sister who had so often shadowed the bouncing figure in the women's magazines, Barbara could still send this description of her activities to the *Smith Alumnae Quarterly:* "I play tennis, do vol. work and admire George Bush!"

From the very beginning, George Bush's political career was simply a larger canvas on which to paint her domestic destiny. All that discipline she had; why, sacrifice was her middle name—*of course* she was happy to visit all 189 precincts in Harris County, Texas, in 1962, to help him win the post of Republican Party county chairman in his first race ever. By the time he ran for Congress, of course she would listen to the same speech, over and over and over and over, while madly needlepointing red, white, and blue patches bearing his name for the good ladies of Houston to sport on their purses.

Her iron manners, too, made her a champion political wife. Admiral Dan Murphy, who was Bush's first vice-presidential chief of staff, remembers sitting next to Barbara at an official dinner somewhere in Africa. "We had been warned by the doctors not to eat any salads, anything that hadn't been cooked. So I didn't, but she was going along eating the salad. I said, 'Mrs. Bush, the doctors told us we shouldn't eat things like that.' And she said, 'This is their country, and they're serving salad, so *I'm going to eat it.*' "

She soldiered her way through a losing Senate race, two terms in Congress, and a painful second Senate loss. She smiled at George Bush's side through his stints as Richard Nixon's ambassador to the U.N.

and then as chairman of the Republican Party—though she had strongly counseled him to avoid the G.O.P. post, which was offered him in the midst of the Watergate cover-up. They spent fourteen months in Beijing, where he was special envoy to the People's Republic of China.

And suddenly, after their return to the U.S. in late 1975, she fell into a black depression—the only time that Barbara's will openly rebelled against Barbara's life.

"I would feel like crying a lot and I really, painfully hurt," she later told *U.S. News & World Report*. "And I would think bad thoughts, I will tell you. It was not nice."

In some interviews she has attributed her depression to "a small chemical imbalance." In some, she has laid it at the door of the women's movement, saying, "Suddenly women's lib had made me feel my life had been wasted."

But in others she has hinted that it was the classic mid-life crisis of the woman who had been raised to gain all her identity through the service of others, whose lives had now left the cozy orbit of her care. Not only was 1976 the year her youngest child, Doro, turned seventeen, but it also marked a devastating shift in her relationship with her husband.

She had suddenly gone from feast to famine. In Beijing, with the younger children off in boarding school, the Bushes were alone for the first time since their marriage, exploring their strange new world together. "I loved it there," she has said over and over. "I had George all to myself."

When he was called back to Washington to become director of the C.I.A., he was all at once in a job whose very nature reinforced the old divide in the Bushes' daily lives: this time, he *couldn't* talk about his job at night.

But if 1976 was the year Barbara's frustration reached a crisis, it was not the only time she expressed it. The Bushes' history is full of poignant references to her unrequited desire for his company.

Even if his work didn't draw him away from home, his frenzied social life did. "His attitude is 'If you want to see me, great, get your clubs.' I think she's constantly trying to make the marriage work that way," says a former aide. "Do you think they ever sit alone and have dinner? I think she'd like that, but she knows it's never going to happen."

Barbara Bush took up golf last year, she told reporters, in the hope of spending more time with the president. But he declined to play with her—just as he had stopped playing tennis doubles with her years before, because he didn't think she was a good enough player.

In what one person on the scene described as a "pathetic" tableau, Barbara and her friend Betsy Heminway went "tagging after him" while he and three buddies played Kennebunkport's Cape Arundel Golf Club. As Maureen Dowd of *The New York Times* reported then, the president gleefully announced to the press that his wife's game "stunk."

"When the president, pressed by journalists, finally agreed to play with his wife, the disillusioned First Lady shot back, 'When? Just like he's going to garden with me one day.' "

"The joking wasn't pleasant," reports one person who saw the scene. "It wasn't fun, Nick-and-Nora repartee."

Even at times when the Bushes' lives meshed more closely, there was an undercurrent of insecurity in Barbara. "She was very aware that he was so young-looking," says a friend from the late sixties. By then Barbara was already hardening her defenses, beginning to make jokes that lanced the wound before someone else could press on it. "I noticed that years back, that she would joke about her appearance," says Peggy Stanton.

Bush often seems to treat Barbara more like a buddy than a wife. In public they present their relationship as a partnership that has transcended sex, entering the realm of teasing friendship. Last summer, on Barbara Bush's sixty-sixth birthday, the millionaire president gave her twenty pairs of Keds as a gift. When he was vice president, says a former aide, his advance teams would joke about having to remind him to open doors for her.

With other women, however—the dozens of attractive young women he meets in his work—George Bush is famously flirtatious. "A biiiiiig flirt," says a female former aide.

Rumors have circulated since 1980 that Bush has had extramarital affairs. But they are unlikely to be proved unless a party involved chooses to talk about it. All we can intuit, through outward signs, is Barbara Bush's long, more subtle struggle to remain as important a part of her husband's life as he has been of hers.

In this regard, his sporting relationships with his male buddies, his manic insistence on constant motion and the presence of crowds, seem as great a challenge as other women do. During the Thanksgiving weekend after his election, the Bushes invited the reporters covering them in Kennebunkport to come to the house for wine and cheese. When *USA Today* reporter Jessica Lee burbled her thanks to Barbara, the future First Lady responded grimly, "Don't thank me. Thank George Bush. *He* invited you." (In these moments of exasperation or pain she often refers to him by both his first and last names.)

"I think there's an essence of sadness about her, way deep down," says someone who has worked with Barbara Bush in politics. "Maybe a lot of who she is developed in reaction to sadness."

When her depression hit, she was not the type to deal with it introspectively. Her husband urged her to talk to someone about it, but her style was to tough it out. She was helped, paradoxically, by Bush's growing political ambitions. His entry into presidential politics opened up a new world, and a more expansive role for her beyond the threshold of their house. The higher George Bush rose, the more he needed Barbara in his political life.

In pictures taken of the early planning meetings for the '88 campaign, there are seven or eight advisers lounging around the pretty green living room of the Bushes' Kennebunkport home. In the background, intent on a jigsaw puzzle or a knitting project, hardly paying any attention at all, is Barbara Bush. She is doing what she once did as a young bride at Yale, sitting for long hours behind home plate while George played ball—keeping score.

This is the first of her two roles in his career: the watchful monitor of internal politics who judges each man and woman by the standard of his or her devotion to George Bush. This role is mysterious to almost everyone who works with Bush, for she is infinitely careful. Yet no one around them doubts that she has great power to influence her husband, especially in his views of people. Some go as far as to suggest that she is his number-one political adviser, "first among equals."

But at almost all times she maintains the ultra-traditional façade of the old-style political wife, who is there only to see to her husband's comfort. Aides and associates from every period of his political career hasten to explain that Barbara Bush is not Nancy Reagan. She does not carry her own agenda, or choose political goals for her husband; she doesn't muck around with policy or sit in on Cabinet meetings. Aides to Sam Skinner and John Sununu say that neither chief of staff, even in the most troubled passages of his tenure, heard often from the First Lady.

But every successful politician has a quasi-official "family" around him, an

inner circle in which personality has a great impact on politics and policy. It is in this realm that Barbara Bush is influential. Here, staffers learn that Barbara is always "just within earshot, just out of sight," in the words of one campaign staffer. Courtiers tread very, very carefully in this domain, knowing, in the words of media adviser Roger Ailes, that "she wants what's best for her husband, and boy, she's strong."

Her second role in George Bush's career is a version of the role she has played in their family life—the disciplinarian.

Bush is skilled at surrounding himself with others who will draw the heat away from him. Says Ed Rollins, "George Bush is a man who wants to be loved. As opposed to respected. It's very important to him that everybody like him." Thus Bush works harder than most at delegating the more unpleasant parts of his job.

In 1988, for example, Bush assigned the role of bad cop to Lee Atwater; for the first three years of his presidency, John Sununu played the heavy. (The effectiveness of having such a tool has become clearer than ever since December, when Sununu left. Lacking this essential foil, Bush has assigned the role piecemeal to various aides, as when spokesman Marlin Fitzwater was sent out to blame the Los Angeles riots on the programs of the Great Society. But because the men who now fill the White House seem too bland to personify evil, responsibility seems to get laid at Bush's door faster than it used to.)

On a subtler level, Bush has always cast family members in similar roles. Today his son George W. Bush plays the role of enforcer or executioner when a tough call must be made: it was the younger Bush, for example, who told Sununu that his time had run out.

And many suggest that, especially during a political race, Barbara plays a more light-handed version of the same role. "She definitely is the institutional memory of slights," says one former political staffer. "She is one distinct other level of the Praetorian Guard."

"I think George Bush has gotten a whole lot of mileage out of letting Bar be thought of as the heavy," says a former political associate. For example, several reporters have been casually told by the president, during one-on-one interviews, that Barbara was angry over something they wrote about him. "Look out, the Silver Fox is really mad at you . . . ," he'll say, effectively delivering the warning that the reporter's copy has offended, without having to risk any personal conflict himself with the reporter.

Whether Barbara's role is conscious and deliberate, or something that evolved wordlessly out of a long marriage, only the Bushes know. Some believe that it is more conscious on her part than on his. "She knows this man very, very well, and his strengths and his weaknesses, and I think she probably compensates for his weaknesses," says Rollins. "She's probably a better judge of character than he is."

"I think she's much more judgmental about people than he is," says another longtime associate. "I think she really takes a bead on someone, and for good or for bad, you're in that box; she's got you pigeonholed."

It is widely believed in Washington that Barbara Bush got fed up with John Sununu earlier than her husband did. But "she's wily in that regard," says a former staffer. "She knows how things work, and if she doesn't want to read about what she did, she won't do it in that way."

Sometimes, however, her intercession is in a staffer's favor. When Transportation Secretary Sam Skinner took over from Sununu, one of his first instincts—clearly communicated, through the grapevine of leaks, to the newspapers—was to replace David Demarest as communications director. But Demarest kept his job—reportedly because Barbara defended him. "Word around the White House was she liked him a lot," says one senior White House aide. It was an important bureaucratic defeat for Skinner, contributing to an early perception that he couldn't follow up on his own intentions.

Typically, Barbara works at the margins, letting staffers know obliquely—but unmistakably—when they are coming up short. In one legendary story, Barbara clipped the wings of Craig Fuller, chief of staff in Bush's second term as vice president. Word got back to her from friends and supporters around the country that Fuller was out of touch, hard to reach. So one day on Air Force Two, seeing him leaf through an inches-high stack of phone messages, she told him—in a voice carefully modulated to reach her husband—"Keep looking . . . you'll find a couple from me."

She uses humor, too, to keep staffers on their toes. In '88, she closely monitored the negative campaign tactics of Atwater and Ailes, because she was concerned they would bring too much criticism down on Bush. When Ailes entered a room in which she was present, she would sometimes greet him jovially, "Here's my bad boy." Coming from Barbara, it's hard to read as anything but a reminder: *I'm watching*.

If George Bush walks a fine line in his political tactics, Barbara is the line referee—making sure that he doesn't cut it *too* close. Aides expect her to have a large role in monitoring the propriety of the Bush campaign this fall. While she has not yet shown a strong influence on campaign strategy, she has expressed concern over how tight—and negative—a race is shaping up. Campaign operatives have been warned that the First Lady will not tolerate tactics so inflammatory that they will provoke retaliatory attacks on the Bush family—especially on her sons.

In talking about Barbara Bush's great influence, however, almost everyone agrees that its boundary is clear. All of her vigilance is directed solely to the greater glory of George Bush. Aides who have tried to draw her into the open on substantive matters have been firmly turned down. Deborah Steelman, Bush's adviser on domestic affairs in the '88 campaign, tried to draft Barbara Bush as an ally on issues like child care, health care, and early education. "It just was rebuffed, officially, at every turn," Steelman recalls. "You only had to do that to her a couple of times to realize that was off bounds."

To the extent that Barbara weighs in on policy, it is in the dimension of taste—as a protector of her husband's reputation. She is said to disagree with the president's stated opinions in several areas; White House aides are especially eager to suggest that she differs from him on abortion and gun control, fanning some faint hope among Republican moderates that she is fighting a good fight over morning coffee every day.

But it seems unlikely that Barbara Bush actually works to change her husband's mind on such issues: his positions in those areas are dictated by politics, and she is as shrewd a politician as anyone around him.

Her role in placating moderates may be more important this year than ever before. In a three-way race that includes Perot, the two major-party candidates will likely be forced to defend their traditional bases, which means they will have to appease the most extreme elements in their coalitions. For Bush, this means waging a fall campaign that offers lots of red meat to social-issue conservatives. Barbara Bush's help will be crucial in telegraphing a contradictory message to more liberal Republicans, especially women angry at Bush over Clarence Thomas and the issue of abortion.

Up to now, Barbara Bush has been able to have it both ways. She has offered herself as evidence of her husband's good intentions, while going out of her way to disclaim any power at all to shape the policies that affect the lives—the squalid

schools, the threadbare health care, the marginal services—of the unfortunates who people her photo ops.

When Bush decided, in the late seventies, to run for president, Barbara pondered what her major "issue" should be and came up with literacy, a canny choice. On the one hand, as she often explains, it touches on every problem in society, ranging from crime to childhood poverty; on the other hand, it doesn't invite any controversy.

As the vice president's wife she joined the board of the child-oriented Reading Is Fundamental, and as First Lady she founded the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, to which she has donated all the profits from *Millie's Book*. It gives away half a million dollars in grants every year to programs that address illiteracy as a self-perpetuating problem passed from parents to children.

But if her signature issue was chosen with calculation, there has been nothing artificial about her good works. Even before Bush's political career began, she was a dedicated volunteer in hospitals; over the years, she has quietly worked at such places as the Washington Home for Incurables, and has served on boards ranging from that of the Ronald McDonald House to that of the predominantly black Morehouse School of Medicine.

Today you can easily see that she has a greater capacity than her husband has to look death and pain in the face. To cancer wards and AIDS clinics, she brings not only helpful publicity but a full self, a capacity to let in the suffering around her and give it its due, which is one of the few gifts any stranger can confer. The president, on the other hand, is famous for squirming through visits to hospitals. When he visited the bedside of a Los Angeles fire fighter shot during the riots, the only consolation he could think to offer was for himself: "I'm sorry Barbara's not here," he said miserably.

Every afternoon the First Lady has her staff send up to her office in the family quarters a clip file of stories related to poverty, education, literacy, child care—her issues. And sometimes she reacts quickly to what she reads. In 1989, for example, she was angered by reports that the Salvation Army had been barred from making Christmas collections at some of the snootier local shopping malls. She made a trip to a mall that did permit the solicitations and took along a press pool to capture her dropping some change into the bucket, which successfully shamed most of the Scrooge-ish merchants into line.

This is as good a use of celebrity as exists in America. It is, by the accounts of Democrats and Republicans, blacks and whites, all of those who have fallen in love with the grandmotherly image of the First Lady, the very best of Barbara Bush.

But even in the uprightness of this image lies a certain moral complexity. For the past three and a half years, the First Lady has almost single-handedly symbolized her husband's good intentions in the realm of domestic affairs. Extended to a society's breadth, the Bush model implies a return to an era in which women relieved their powerful men—relieved government—of responsibility for the disadvantaged. It is the old Victorian contract, in which life was divided into two spheres, male and female; while men ran the world, their women ran the soup kitchens.

Bush advisers have worked hard over the years to suggest that Barbara's compassion will one day rub off on her husband, to imply that she can (and should) be relied on to police his interest in social services. "Every time he says 'Head Start,' that's Bar," spokeswoman Sheila Tate told reporters at the dawn of his administration.

And for some time the country seemed to accept the idea that Barbara was a facet of George—a reliable indicator of his goals. At the time of Bush's inauguration, columnists raved about how Barbara would be "the conscience of the White House."

But without Barbara, Americans might have noticed sooner that the self-styled "education president" had offered nothing meaningful in the way of education reform.

Without Barbara, voters might have noticed from the start how disengaged Bush seemed from domestic concerns.

Barbara Bush successfully silenced the logical question that called out for response: Isn't the *president* supposed to be the conscience of the White House?

As George Bush campaigns for a second term, a lot rides on Barbara Bush's careful balancing act. She is the answer to a frightened campaign's prayers, a surrogate campaigner who can command almost as much press and hoopla as the president can—while incurring comparatively little risk. As early as last winter one could trace the dawning importance of her role. She was sent to New Hampshire to file the papers for Bush's candidacy, "because nobody would dare to boo Barbara Bush," in the words of a strategist. She spent more time campaigning in the state than the president did.

And when Bush officially announced his candidacy, it was Barbara Bush who introduced him. In a classic reversal of roles, the candidate quoted his wife, referring to "my favorite political philosopher, Barbara Bush."

All through the spring, once the threat of Buchanan's primary campaign had faded, she traveled far more than her husband did, headlining as many as thirty major fund-raisers around the country.

Republican strategists go as far as to say that they believe voters ambivalent about George Bush may think twice about voting his wife out of the White House. It's an extraordinary exception to the normal wisdom, which suggests that the best most spouses can do is adhere to the Hippocratic oath of politics: Just do no harm.

Opinions differ about how badly Barbara Bush wants to stay in the White House. She is said to blame the presidency for the problems of her son Neil, implicated in the Silverado Banking, Savings and Loan Association debacle.

Friends also surmise she has had a more difficult time than she lets on dealing with Graves' disease, the thyroid condition that has tired her and painfully distended her eyes.

But by most accounts she has reveled in her time as First Lady. Even as the president floundered through the spring and early summer, his polls in free-fall, Barbara Bush lived in a charmed circle within her control. She has reached the apotheosis of the life she read about in her daddy's magazines, a victory she presents as grand affirmation of the ultra-traditional plan she has lived by.

"My mail tells me that a lot of fat, white-haired, wrinkled ladies are tickled pink," she said on the eve of Bush's inauguration. "I mean, look at me—if I can be a success, so can they."



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But only one person gets to be married to the president of the United States. It is a rare full-time homemaker and college dropout who receives an honorary degree from Smith, who is asked to speak to the graduating class at Wellesley, who appears on the covers of *Time* and *Life*.

George Bush's political ascent allowed her to enact her role of helpmate on a vast, symbolic scale—one that offered more ego gratification than the same role performed as an anonymous daily sacrament.

This was how she staved off the fated collision between her cramped idea of women's role and her great strength of personality. It is also how she tamed the most turbulent themes of her own life.

Toward the end of the Republicans' May dinner in Miami Beach, two videos about Barbara Bush were shown on the giant screen that hung above the diners. Together they suggested just how far she has traveled.

The first was a brief, condescending biography prepared by the state party. It showed more events from George Bush's life than from his wife's, and included all the same photos that appear in standard Bush biographies—showing handsome young politician George Bush surrounded by his happy brood of children and, standing at the back of the picture, his stocky, weathered wife with her oddly dyed hair and uncertain smile.

But then, with the second videotape, a spectral George Bush appeared on the screen to salute his popular spouse.

"Remember her Wellesley commencement speech?" he asked rhetorically. "Some students protested, saying she's just a woman who followed her husband. Well, they got it wrong. In countless ways, I've followed Barbara.

"I think it's appropriate," he continued, "that Barbara would be honored at the Statesman's Dinner. Someone once said that a politician thinks of the next election, but a statesman thinks of the next generation. Well, that's Barbara Bush, in so many ways."

It seemed an unconsciously honest moment, alluding not only to the reasons America loves her but also to the reasons America now scorns him. Suddenly, it was strangely poignant to watch his video-blurred face, to hear his canned voice, as he talked about the famous, widely loved woman being celebrated there in the flesh.

The moment seemed to summarize the ironic reversal being played out before the nation: Now he is the burdened one, she the butterfly. He can no longer maintain the buoyancy that has been the hallmark of his life, while for her, public goodwill remains at flood tide, affirming her life's choices.

How impossibly sweet it must feel to her. Today she helps her husband most by embodying the levity that was always, until this hour, his to claim. □

Stavros Niarchos

(Continued from page 137) studies at the University of Athens. Instead, he took a job at the flour mill owned by his uncles.

He worked hard, making money and using his uncles' connections to join the Royal Greek Yacht Club. He learned to sail on a cousin's yacht, and he bought a flashy Bugatti. With black sheets on his bed and mirrors on his walls and ceiling, he became a notorious ladies' man. At age twenty-one he married Helen Sporides, the daughter of an admiral who found Niarchos so unsuitable that he insisted the marriage be dissolved after less than a month.

While in his twenties, Stavros Niarchos conjured up the role he would play in life—a powerful businessman who would become a great gentleman, a Maecenas to artists, and the social equal of European aristocrats. His fortune, he decided, would come from shipping. Since Greece had no real aristocracy, the shipping establishment—tightly knit families with names such as Embiricos, Goulandris, Kulukundis, and Mavroleon—came closest to approximating society. But shipowning passed from father to son, so Niarchos had to find his own way. He prodded his uncles to buy some freighters. When his family refused to expand further, he raised money and bought one of his uncles' ships through a London agent. In the first year of World War II, Niarchos's ship was bombed by the *Luftwaffe*. For an investment of $60,000, the wily Niarchos collected nearly $1 million in insurance.

By then he was married to Melpomene Capparis, the twenty-year-old widow of a Greek diplomat. She was small and slender, with a classic profile and a lively wit. Her family had once been wealthy, so she was as well educated and cultivated as she was beautiful. Fellow Greek Helen Vlachos concluded that "Stavros admired Melpo more than he really loved her."

The couple moved to New York, where Niarchos paid $43,000 for an estate in Lloyd Neck, Long Island, that they filled with art, antique furniture, and silver. He continued to buy ships and make profits on the insurance when they were sunk. His membership in the Royal Greek Yacht Club gave him officer rank in the Greek navy, but he spent little of his tour of duty at sea. He shuttled from Manhattan to the Ritz Hotel in London to a house with a staff of three in Alexandria, Egypt, where he worked at the headquarters of the Greek government in exile.

Back in New York after the war, he bought old Victory and Liberty ships at bargain prices, sold them for tidy profits, and soon owned a fleet of war-surplus tankers that he had purchased through American holding companies. Not only did he pay a fraction of what it would have cost to build them, but he also avoided U.S. taxes by leasing his ships to a Panamanian company. That maneuver prompted a Justice Department investigation several years later. Niarchos settled and paid several million dollars in fines.

Niarchos and Onassis vaulted into the major leagues by building bigger and bigger tankers to transport oil. To finance the construction, both men persuaded the American oil companies to sign long-term charters. Using the charters as collateral, Niarchos and Onassis secured loans from major U.S. insurance companies.

As Niarchos counted his millions, his marriage to Melpomene disintegrated. "She wanted to show she was cultured, and made fun of him in conversations," recalled a Greek friend from those days. "She put him down, or, rather, tried to." Her refusal to submit to his dominance infuriated Niarchos.

He took an apartment in Manhattan, where he romanced a Scandinavian model named Selene Mahri. They dined at El Morocco and the Stork Club, and he set her up stylishly, buying her two homes, a car, and two poodles in addition to the requisite jewelry. When they parted, she kept only the poodles, although he later gave her two Corots as a gift when she married Michigan millionaire John Wendell Anderson III.

In Greece, arranged marriages have long served to keep strangers out, to preserve fortunes, and to hold women down. "Women even in the richest Greek

families married whomever they were told. Most were reasonably happy. They were brought up for that," a Greek man from an old shipping family told me. For Tina and Eugenie Livanos, only the selection of two wealthy upstarts was somewhat unconventional.

Aristotle Onassis and Stavros Niarchos met their future wives while currying the favor of the young women's father, Greek shipping titan Stavros Livanos. He had left London at the outbreak of World War II and settled in New York City, in luxurious quarters at the Plaza hotel. Although he lived well on his estimated $200 million fortune, Livanos was at heart a skinflint. He rode the subway to work, picking up each day's copy of *The New York Times* from the subway platform rather than paying for it. Once, a Niarchos associate encountered him on a train to Baltimore. Years later, the associate was still incredulous over what happened next: "Livanos asked me to have coffee with him. Before we arrived, the waiter on the train came with the bill. Livanos said, 'Separate bills.' For coffee!"

Like others of his generation, Livanos had bought his ships with his own money. He took a dim view of the high-flying financial schemes Niarchos and Onassis were using to build their empires, although he was impressed by their energetic shrewdness. When Niarchos wooed fourteen-year-old Tina, Livanos seized the easy excuse that she was too young to marry a man not even divorced from his second wife. Two years later Onassis asked to marry Tina, and Livanos balked again, but then offered the hand of her older sister, Eugenie, instead. (Onassis later observed that Livanos "regarded his daughters like ships and wanted to dispose of the first of the line first.") Onassis insisted on Tina, and they were married at the end of 1946. She was seventeen, he was forty. Less than a year later, thirty-eight-year-old Niarchos and Eugenie, twenty-one, were married in the same Greek Orthodox cathedral in Manhattan.

"The father was not happy about either of the marriages," one well-connected Greek man explained to me. "He would have aspired to have them marry more status in the Greek community. These two were up-and-coming but not very polished characters." Livanos's wife, Arietta, a stylish woman with a penchant for dark glasses, took a more practical approach. "The wife ruled in that family," continued my Greek source. "She accepted both proposals. That was her area, her daughters, and she pushed the old man to say O.K."

It has often been said that Niarchos was not entirely happy with the outcome, either. He had seen Tina first, and Onassis had snagged her, fueling the rivalry between the two iron-willed men. Yet the dark-haired and delicately pretty Eugenie seemed the perfect wife for Niarchos. She and her sister were educated at the exclusive Heathfield School in England, finishing at Miss Hewitt's Classes in New York. They spoke English with a British accent and were fluent in French. Eugenie was reserved but charming, and she carried herself with great dignity. She made the ideal hostess for Niarchos's planned ascent into the upper reaches of European society when he moved his headquarters to London in 1949.

Their first step was acquiring totems of status. They began modestly, with several Renoirs, a small van Gogh costing $25,000, and a magnificent Pietà by El Greco that Niarchos bought for $400,000 to celebrate New Year's Eve in 1954. "I can sit for hours looking and always discovering new details," he once said. "I like gay, relaxing paintings. I find peace looking at them, watching beautiful things."

The capstone of his collection was the extraordinary haul he made in 1957, when he paid $3 million for fifty-eight paintings and one sculpture that Hollywood actor Edward G. Robinson, a noted collector, was forced to sell in a divorce settlement. Niarchos placed his bid by telephone from Saint-Moritz after Eugenie had flown incognito to Los Angeles for a firsthand look.

The best paintings hung in the *Creole*, the black-hulled, three-masted Niarchos yacht. At 190 feet, with teak decks, mahogany paneling, and polished brass fittings, the *Creole* was considered one of the most beautiful boats on the Côte d'Azur. For some years, Niarchos insisted that his priceless art was safe from the salt air in temperature-controlled salons, but then he quietly moved the paintings ashore. "One could put a Boudin on a yacht but not a Renoir," he explained to friends with typical hauteur.

Niarchos carefully positioned himself at the essential stations of the jet set's yearly progress. In the winter he and Eugenie parked at the Palace Hotel in Saint-Moritz, where he rented five extra rooms for the crew of his Dakota airplane, which used the frozen lake as a landing strip. Frequently he paid the orchestra to play in the Palace bar until seven in the morning. "It was very amusing," recalled Jimmy Douglas, a wealthy American expatriate. "He would get quite drunk and yell 'God bless America' over and over because of some American tax setup he was taking advantage of."

In 1954, Niarchos paid $575,000 for the forty-two-room Château de la Croë at Cap d'Antibes, which had previously been rented by King Leopold of Belgium, Queen Helen of Romania, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor—and Ari and Tina Onassis. Overlooking the ocean, surrounded by twenty-five acres of lawns and gardens, the château had a grand portico and marble columns. In the drawing room, the ceiling slid open to reveal the sky. But Stavros and Eugenie used the château primarily for guests, preferring to live in the two-story gatekeeper's house.

Four years later Niarchos bought the island of Spetsapoula, which he transformed into a paradise for shooting parties. In addition to the main, L-shaped villa, he built fifteen guest cottages; a grotto with sauna, rock pool, dressing rooms, and exercise machines; a cinema; and beaches with imported sand. The island was stocked with thousands of pheasant, quail, and partridge. During the shoots, the birds were driven out above the cliffs as a fleet of Chris Crafts circled below to pluck them from the water when they dropped. Between drives, everyone would take a swim. Little wonder that kings, queens, and dukes signed on for the Niarchos shoots a year in advance.

Chanaleilles, however, was the masterpiece that Niarchos used to define himself. Beyond the initial cost of $500,000, Niarchos spent twice that amount on the three-year restoration by the architect Emiglio Terry. The curtains alone, including specially woven lace replicas of those made for Marie Antoinette at Versailles, cost several hundred thousand dollars.

Strategic alliances helped Niarchos solidify his social position. He formed a partnership with socialite Loel Guinness to build a ski lift in Saint-Moritz from the Corviglia Club to the Piz Nair summit. He invited the Duchess of Kent and other highborn women to christen his ships, giving them diamond bracelets and gold Fabergé cigarette boxes for their trouble. And he put on his payroll aristocrats such as Prince Alexander of Yugoslavia, Count George Theotoki of Greece (known for his refrain "I would die for the boss"), and the Marquess of Milford Haven, nephew of Lord Louis Mountbatten. Suspecting the motive behind the hiring, Mountbatten asked an associate of Niarchos's for assurances that the marquess

would not be used for social purposes. Niarchos insisted on taking him on junkets to Saint-Moritz anyway.

For purely ingratiating gestures, nothing could top the back-to-back cruises Niarchos bankrolled in 1954 and 1955. The first was for royalty only, with a guest list headed by Queen Frederika of Greece. The following summer he gave the famed party organizer Elsa Maxwell $90,000 to charter a yacht and invite the best of European society. With 120 celebrities from six countries aboard, the *Achilleus* sailed through the Aegean for two weeks in a great blast of publicity. "He didn't know most of those on board," recalled one passenger, "but he wanted to." Yet Niarchos was much too clever to travel with his guests. Instead, he cruised nearby on the *Creole*, making just enough appearances to create a mystique.

He was impeccable in providing the surroundings of hospitality, yet he offered little of himself. On *Creole* cruises, white-gloved stewards fussed over guests while Niarchos remained on his deck, reading telexes or meeting with aides. "We never saw Stavros before noon," says a French countess. "Then he gave all the latest news at lunch and talked about Wall Street with the men. He had his day organized. He would work, then appear. Then work. I always wondered why he invited us. I could never have real contact with him. We were part of the scenery."

In those early days, Niarchos had a mischievous streak and a fondness for pranks. When socialite Drue Heinz gave a party in Saint-Moritz and asked guests to come as their "repressed desire," Niarchos showed up dressed as a Boy Scout. During the *Achilleus* cruise, he briefly fooled the passengers into thinking that Corfu had been rocked by an earthquake. When they finally went ashore, he disguised himself as a bartender who clumsily stuck his fingers into everyone's drinks. "For Stavros, you had to have a sense of humor and answer quick," says a French aristocrat. "Otherwise, he wouldn't bother to talk to you."

In awkward situations, Eugenie's patient manner helped smooth the way. "I think Eugenie adored him," says Drue Heinz, who sailed several times on the *Creole*. "Greek women are different, very supplicant, and she seemed happy. They were in cahoots—a team."

Niarchos rewarded Eugenie's forbearance by showering her with jewels. When their first child, Philip, was born, he gave her a $100,000 emerald necklace. Several years later he paid $1 million for a 128-carat diamond. "It used to embarrass her," recalls Marina Cicogna. "When she wore it, she always hid it under a bow in her dress. We would make a sign across the room, and she would lift the bow and flash the diamond as if it were something dirty. She was funny like that."

Yet beneath the surface gaiety were traces of sadness. "Eugenie always thought she was the ugly duckling, and Tina the bubbly and sexy beauty," says Marina Cicogna. Her self-esteem sank lower with her husband's relentless womanizing. Jimmy Douglas recalled the time back in the late 1950s when he was dancing with Eugenie at the Palace Hotel: "She told me how unhappy she was that Stavros was looking at another girl. I remember I was very surprised she said that. Then she said, 'All of my friends told me never to marry Stavros.' She seemed close to tears."

Once Niarchos had attained his goals of vast wealth and secure social position, the chip on his shoulder only grew larger. He became more remote and deeply mistrustful. "He is very reticent to say anything about himself or how he feels," says Rosemarie Kanzler. "He has never shown his feelings."

Some acquaintances believe his indifference to others stems from his early days. Niarchos doted on his mother but seldom spoke of his father. Colleagues remember the time Niarchos launched his 30,000-ton tanker, *World Peace*. Among the large crowd of dignitaries was an elderly man who came without an invitation. As Doris Lilly recounted the scene in her book *Those Fabulous Greeks*, the old man introduced himself to the port captain as Spyros Niarchos and announced that he was looking for his son. When the captain reported this to Stavros, "he was told to take the old man to the room of the chief engineer and give him lunch, but keep him there."

While Niarchos has absolute self-confidence as a businessman, some who have been close to him say he is less certain of himself in social settings. One impediment, says a former colleague, is that "he couldn't handle languages well." Niarchos has been somewhat deaf since he was young, and he has a nasal timbre combined with a lisp that muffles his words, as if he were speaking with a mouthful of food. Those who spent a lot of time with him learned to decode and comprehend, almost like acquiring a language. But with strangers his speech impediment became a barrier. "He would be furious if he would say something and you would say 'What?' He would get very mad at you," says one Frenchwoman. As a result, he rarely engaged in more than perfunctory conversations.

By creating his own world, Niarchos could avoid dealing with fools and knaves. "He wants to be surrounded by intelligent people," says Rosemarie Kanzler. "Others who don't give him anything special he doesn't want." Yet as he had to deal less and less with day-to-day problems, he became more abstract, and all his personal relations took on an air of unreality.

Success reinforced Niarchos's belief that he could make it on his own. "He would talk with people, but very little," says one Greek who worked with him for more than a decade. "It all came from him. He had a partner or two, but they had no influence. He did it himself."

Niarchos has never bothered to conceal the effort he gives to his business. Even on safari, he used to have packets of information dropped into the bush. "In his mind, work was the center of his life," says one former longtime associate. "His extreme intelligence was concentrated on the business. He would pass serious and penetrating judgments on people with just one sentence."

Some years ago Niarchos was entertaining British friends on Spetsapoula, along with a tiresome German shipbuilder and his wife. The weather was very hot, and Niarchos served one course of rich food after another. After two straight days of foie gras in virtually every dish, one of the British guests asked about the menu. Replied Niarchos, "You don't realize the German is very greedy, and I am trying to make a deal. In a day or two he will have such terrible indigestion that he will be vulnerable."

This total absorption with business wears down his associates, but many have stayed with Niarchos for long periods nevertheless. Marke Zervudachi, who oversees his art collection and other investments in London, has served him for forty years. Niarchos's subordinates thrive on his constant stimulation, with the knowledge that his storms of temper pass quickly and that he generously rewards good work. Says Peter Payne, "It is like what they say about the Caterpillar marine engine. The rougher you treat them, the better they are. But they have a tremendous sense of loyalty, and he has enormous power over them."

She might have been just another beautiful diversion, but the twenty-four-year-old daughter of magnate Henry Ford II thrust Stavros Niarchos into his first

major scandal. Growing up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, Charlotte Ford had led a sheltered life. For twelve years she attended a convent school, where she went to Mass each day and was subjected to periods of enforced silence. After her splashy $250,000 debut, her father decided it was time she had some fun, so he took her to Europe.

Niarchos saw her at a party in Saint-Moritz early in 1965. "Did you notice how Stavros was looking at you?" her stepmother, Cristina Ford, said afterward. She had, and after Eugenie left the next day, Charlotte and Stavros skied together regularly and went out every night. Niarchos dazzled her with his stylish, extravagant life. The following summer, her father chartered a 212-foot yacht, the *Shemara*, and Niarchos followed behind in the *Creole*. He helicoptered in and out, single-mindedly pursuing Charlotte, flattering her, giving her lovely jewels for no particular reason, and eventually taking her to bed.

By the autumn, Charlotte was pregnant. Henry Ford flew to London for a meeting with Niarchos, who agreed to marry her. At the time, Niarchos could not enter the United States, because of tax problems. It has long been rumored that President Lyndon Johnson helped prod Niarchos into marriage by assuring him that the government would find a way to resolve his situation. In fact, several months after Niarchos married Charlotte, the U.S. government announced a financial settlement with Niarchos, and he could again operate freely in America. The reason, says a source close to Charlotte, was "Henry Ford's friendship with L.B.J."

The wedding and its aftermath were surreal, even by the jaded standards of the international jet set. A few days after Eugenie granted Niarchos a divorce in December 1965 in Juárez, Mexico, a Ford-company plane whisked in Charlotte and a Niarchos aide. Niarchos came from Canada on a second company plane. For still-unfathomable reasons, Niarchos scheduled the marriage to take place at midnight in a suite of a Juárez motel. Before the ceremony, Niarchos pulled a forty-carat diamond (nicknamed "the skating rink" by the Fords) from an envelope, threw it at Charlotte, and said, "Here's your wedding ring." She pointed out that a simple band would suffice, so they used one she was already wearing.

A chartered 707 took them to Switzerland. Stavros and Charlotte moved into the honeymoon suite on the top floor of the Palace Hotel in Saint-Moritz, while Eugenie and the four children stayed in the Niarchos chalet. Every day Niarchos would go home to work, leaving Charlotte on her own. At midday she would meet him for lunch at the Corviglia Club, and he would spend the afternoon skiing with Eugenie and the children. The ménage à trois stirred up a tabloid frenzy that would have made Donald, Ivana, and Marla blush. But when Charlotte went on outings arranged by Caprice Badrutt, wife of the owner of the Palace, Niarchos had a fit of jealousy. He accused Badrutt of trying to fix Charlotte up with other men, and he insisted that his wife cut off contact with her.

The newlyweds saw each other only intermittently over the next few months as Charlotte returned to Manhattan to redecorate the Niarchos triplex apartment on Sutton Place. His mother lived in the apartment below and hardly made Charlotte feel welcome. "I'll never forget the things Stavros's mother said to me. She accused me of bewitching him, of deranging his mind," Charlotte later told *The New York Times*.

After Elena's birth in May, Charlotte took her to Château de la Croë, only to learn that Niarchos had gone on a safari with Philip. Her husband made a few perfunctory visits before Walter Saunders, head of the Niarchos New York office, arrived in Cap d'Antibes to say his boss wanted a divorce.

The following March, Charlotte was back in Juárez. When she returned to her apartment, Niarchos had left word that she must phone him immediately. "I tried to call to get you to stop," he said. "It's done, my dear," she replied. He proceeded to seduce her all over again. She cruised with him on the *Creole*, and he gave her bracelets, rings, and earrings of rubies, diamonds, and emeralds until his interest expired. "My mistake was in being too submissive," Charlotte said several years later.

"If you fell into the hands of Stavros S. Niarchos, you had to be very well prepared," says one Italian man who knew them both. "Charlotte was naïve. She couldn't do anything. She was squeezed like a lemon." The strain took its toll when Charlotte contracted Bell's palsy, a virus that paralyzed the right side of her face. Her doctors told her it was caused by stress. Although she recovered, the disease left her with some permanent nerve damage.

For several years following the divorce, Niarchos paid attention to their daughter, Elena. During the summer of 1969, he had her for two months on Spetsapoula. But otherwise, he would see her only at brief meetings in Nassau. "It was a disaster," recalled a close friend of Charlotte's. "They couldn't understand each other, and Elena would come back depressed." Sometimes he would arrive suddenly for tea in New York, but Elena was too uneasy even to sit on his lap.

Niarchos insists that he cut off contact with her twelve years ago because she wanted to use Ford as her surname. Friends of Charlotte's say the rupture occurred even earlier, mainly because the other children found Elena's presence disturbing. Her only recent encounter with any of her siblings took place several years ago, when she met Constantine by chance in a New York bar. He screamed at her, upsetting her terribly, and Niarchos called the next day to apologize.

Charlotte has told friends that Niarchos has rejected Elena's various efforts to contact him. "He couldn't deal with the guilt," Charlotte has said. But acknowledging his feelings would be equally impossible. Notes one source close to Charlotte, "I don't think he is capable of allowing himself to do that. It would show weakness. And he might not like what he saw."

With Charlotte out of the picture, Niarchos resumed his life with Eugenie. The Greek Orthodox Church recognized neither his Juárez divorce from Eugenie nor his marriage to Charlotte, so he and Eugenie never went through the formality of a second marriage ceremony. Why did she take him back? The children were obviously paramount. But there was another factor. Says Rosemarie Kanzler, "Eugenie was quite agreeable. She knew he would come back to her. She told me herself. She said he promised to come back after a year."

Still, friends say Eugenie never recovered from the experience. The womanizing continued unabated, albeit more discreetly. Greek journalist Taki Theodoracopoulos contends that Eugenie should have understood that her husband's behavior reflected the "male-dominated macho Greek culture. A man is expected to womanize." Although Eugenie didn't complain publicly, she started taking sedatives. She became more withdrawn, sitting quietly in a corner during parties instead of mingling as she had in earlier days.

On May 3, 1970, Eugenie Niarchos walked into her husband's office in their villa on Spetsapoula and found her husband on the telephone talking to Charlotte Ford. It was midafternoon in New York,

sometime after ten at night in Greece. He had called his ex-wife on impulse to say hello and inquire about three-year-old Elena. He had no particular purpose, Charlotte told friends, and she knew he had been drinking, because he repeated himself and slurred his words more than usual. After a conversation of less than ten minutes, Charlotte hung up, nonplussed.

A Niarchos spokesman would later say that Eugenie "misunderstood the intent of the call," which prompted a fierce argument about whether Elena should return to the island that summer. According to one report, they also fought over a request from Eugenie for "a large sum of money" for a member of her family that Niarchos had rebuffed.

She stormed into her bedroom, where shortly before eleven P.M. a maid found her lying unconscious next to her bed, with an empty bottle of Seconal nearby. Niarchos later told authorities that he had tried desperately to revive Eugenie by slapping her face, shaking her shoulders, splashing her with water, putting his finger down her throat to make her vomit, and, with the assistance of his valet, trying to force hot coffee into her mouth. Rather than immediately summoning help from the island of Spetse, a ten-minute boat ride away, Niarchos waited a half-hour before phoning Athens for his shipboard doctor. By the time the physician arrived by helicopter ninety minutes later, Eugenie, aged forty-four, was dead.

Because of the numerous bruises on her body, the doctor refused to sign a death certificate, and police inspectors ordered her body sent to Athens for an autopsy. The report concluded she had died after swallowing twenty-five Seconals. The panel of forensic specialists also detailed the extensive injuries to her body, including bruises on her throat, arms, and legs; internal bleeding in several places on her back and stomach; a large bruise and swelling by her left eye. Since Niarchos said she had fallen to the floor several times and he had grabbed her by the neck, the autopsy concluded that the injuries resulted from his frantic attempts at resuscitation. But the examining doctors also cited an "inexplicable and inexcusable delay in calling a doctor." And several news accounts said that one finding, not officially revealed, was a ruptured spleen.

That August the public prosecutor in Piraeus ordered a second autopsy, which concluded that the level of barbiturates in Eugenie's blood was not lethal, and that she had died as a result of injuries. Yet another inquiry suggested that Eugenie had been given the Seconals by force. The prosecutor recommended that Niarchos be charged with fatally injuring his wife—the equivalent of second-degree murder. One important individual pushing for a prosecution was Ari Onassis, who was bidding against Niarchos for a multimillion-dollar business contract with the Greek government. Less than a month later a three-judge panel in Piraeus rejected the criminal charges. This finding was upheld by the Athens High Court, which concluded that Eugenie had killed herself.

Five years later, an assistant prosecutor named George Xenakis charged that judges, doctors, and police officials had covered up Eugenie's murder. He contended that Niarchos had hit her in the face, kicked her in the abdomen, tried to strangle her, and then given her Seconals in an amount insufficient to kill her. No formal charges were brought against any of those involved in the alleged cover-up. Yet with so many unanswered questions, the cloud over Niarchos never dissipated.

Still, twenty years later, the proponents of the suicide theory seem to have the edge. Eugenie had tried to take her life in Saint-Moritz several years earlier, and she suffered from bouts of deep depression. "It was definitely a suicide," says one former close associate of Niarchos's. "I have read all the papers, and from a legal point of view it was suicide. When you are in that condition and someone handles you, it leaves bruises." Eugenie did leave a note, but it was cryptic and did not say she intended to take her life. Scrawled in red pencil, it said, "For the first time in all our life together I have begged you to help me. I have implored you. The error is mine. But sometimes one must forgive and forget." A nearly illegible postscript in ballpoint pen reads, "26 is an unlucky number. It is the double of 12.10b of whisky."

The essential question is whether Niarchos drove his fragile wife toward suicide with mental cruelty. One close friend contends that, her husband aside, Eugenie was "a depressive woman. She was always too quiet, never gay, not a conversationalist." But Constantine, the youngest and most outspoken son, has said that his father "broke Eugenie's spirit."

Niarchos seemed a beaten man in the months following Eugenie's death. Confined to Greece during the murder inquiries, he appeared haggard and distracted. His nephew said he had a "nervous breakdown." He pulled himself together, as always, by throwing himself back into his work.

By ski season in Saint-Moritz he had rebounded. On his arm was the beautiful former wife of the actor Yul Brynner. Doris Brynner moved into Villa Marguns, prompting the gossips to nickname her "the nanny," because she seemed determined to ingratiate herself with Niarchos by assuming the role of hostess and governess. Niarchos had no interest in her as a wife, but maintained a cordial friendship.

Alert eyes had already caught the growing closeness between Niarchos and Eugenie's sister, Tina. Divorced from Onassis since 1959, she was married to the Marquess of Blandford, the future eleventh Duke of Marlborough, but she had begun to tire of the horse-and-hounds life at the Blandford estate, Lee Place. Since Eugenie's death, she had taken her sister's two youngest children to live with her in London.

If there were any lingering doubts about Niarchos in the Livanos family, the formidable matriarch, Arietta, suppressed them. Her order to close ranks even while he was under suspicion demonstrates the self-protective nature of Greek families. It was Arietta who pushed her daughter toward Niarchos in an effort to further unite the families and their fortunes.

Tina had been the first choice of Niarchos decades earlier, and over the years they often skied together and flirted. "Tina was petite, gay, fun-loving, full of laughter, like a little bird. Stavros always preferred her," says Anne-Marie d'Estainville, who often joined them on the slopes. Before Eugenie died, she had even accused Niarchos of having an affair with Tina, which both of them denied.

With Tina whispering to friends her suspicions about Niarchos's role in Eugenie's death, she hardly seemed inclined to be his wife. But in a letter to a close friend, Tina revealed that Eugenie had said that if anything happened to her, Tina should marry Niarchos to look after the children. Following her divorce from Blandford in May 1971, Tina shared a house in Villefranche on the Riviera with her brother, George Livanos. She sailed with Niarchos on the *Creole*, he came to her villa, and they dined frequently at Château Madrid in the hills above the Mediterranean. In September they went to a spa in Quiberon, Brittany. Between hot sea baths and massages, they took long walks and talked quietly over meals. After ten days they flew to Lausanne, Switzerland, to tell her delighted mother that they would marry.

Their ten-minute wedding in a town hall in Paris was as carefully planned as a

top-secret military maneuver. Assisted by his close friend Peter Payne, Niarchos eluded reporters by changing cars several times, while his lawyer escorted Tina and her mother. Friends say Niarchos hoped that the marriage would convince doubters that he was innocent of Eugenie's death.

Tina and Stavros still ran on the social fast track. Niarchos sold the *Creole* and built an elaborate new yacht, the 385-foot *Atlantis*. With accommodations for twenty-two guests and fifty crew members, it had five decks and a helicopter landing pad, an oval swimming pool, a gymnasium, a cinema seating forty, and a garage for his blue Rolls-Royce and Volkswagen Karmann Ghia. But such touches as a chrome fireplace and bedsheets in hues matching the paintings on guest-room walls seemed vulgar compared with the sleek *Creole*.

Tina changed, too. Only months after her marriage, friends noticed that she appeared subdued. Both her children had stopped speaking to her. Christina and Alexander Onassis were furious that she had married their father's sworn enemy. According to British society columnist Nigel Dempster, Christina told her husband, Joseph Bolker, "Stavros killed Eugenie, and he's going to kill my mother." To ease the tension, Tina followed her sister's path and turned to barbiturates.

In January 1973, Alexander Onassis was killed in a plane crash, and Tina fell apart. On the *Atlantis*, she would lock herself in her cabin, listening to a tape of his voice for ten hours straight. At dinners and parties, she seldom said a word; her hands shook, and her face looked puffy. She was drinking heavily and taking even more pills. Late in the summer of 1974, one New York socialite saw her at dinner in the South of France. "She seemed sedated," he said. "I thought, How unlike Tina. She's out of it."

Shortly after Stavros and Tina arrived in Paris in early October, Tina had lunch at the apartment of Anne-Marie d'Estainville. "She opened her bag and took out all these pills—red, green, yellow, and blue," recalled d'Estainville. "She said, 'My nerves are so bad after Alexander's death, and I am so unhappy about my life.' " She also complained that Anne-Marie's sister, Hélène, had seemed too familiar with Niarchos on the *Atlantis* several weeks earlier. Anne-Marie assured her they were not having an affair, and she made Tina flush the pills down the toilet

Tina's spirits lifted when Anne-Marie took her to an atelier, where Tina bought two mink bedcovers for Stavros and Philip at half-price. Tina seemed in even better spirits at a luncheon several days later with a group of women. "She had just bought seventeen dresses, had her hair done and her face beautifully made up," says Rosemarie Kanzler. "You don't do that when you don't want to live."

The next morning, on October 10, Tina was found dead in her bedroom at Chanaleilles by a chambermaid who was bringing her breakfast. She was forty-four years old. Comparisons to the tragedy nearly four years earlier were inevitably drawn. There were no marks on her body, and no suicide note. Niarchos had been sleeping in his own bedroom, but inexplicably he waited more than twenty-four hours before announcing her death. Confusion over the cause of death sharpened suspicions once again. One spokesman said it had been a heart attack or fluid in the lungs; another cited a blood clot that had traveled from her leg to her heart—certainly plausible, since she had been treated by doctors for phlebitis. And several news reports mentioned the likelihood of a barbiturate overdose.

Christina Onassis suspected murder and pressed for an autopsy. The report released by the public prosecutor's office confirmed death from edema of the lung (the same thing that would cause Christina's death fourteen years later). Even though she was known to take sleeping pills and other sedatives, there was no report on barbiturate levels in Tina's blood. This oversight raised suspicions among many of her friends, who theorized that she fatally—and possibly accidentally—combined alcohol and pills.

Anne-Marie d'Estainville had a rare glimpse of what Niarchos himself thought when she went to lunch at Chanaleilles a week after Tina's death. "All Stavros wanted to do was talk about Tina," she recalled. "He was completely undone. He kept saying, 'Why did she have to do it?' He didn't cry, but it was as close as anyone could come to crying without tears."

Several months afterward, Niarchos still seemed in a peculiar state. A friend from New York went aboard the *Atlantis*, and Niarchos startled him by saying, "You were such a friend of Tina. I want to show you her cabin." He unlocked the door and said, "Nobody comes in here." There was Tina's nightgown thrown over the chair, and her hairbrush on the dressing table, just as she had left them.

Whether or not Tina had intended to take her life, the spotlight once again turned on Niarchos as a source of her deepening misery. "Maybe she died of pulmonary edema," says one British socialite, "but it was brought on by acute unhappiness." Rosemarie Kanzler disputes that conclusion: "I think Stavros was very much in love with Tina, but he was still flirting for his ego. He was a womanizer, and what can we do about that? The mentality is, he has to have a change."

Niarchos did little to dispel the doubts when he issued a statement insensitively revealing a suicide attempt by Christina Onassis two months before Tina's death, implying that Christina, not he, had caused her mother's depression. Equally troubling was his attempt to keep Tina's entire fortune, which Christina prevented. After a legal battle, Christina got $64 million and Niarchos settled for $9 million—plus one ship.

It didn't take long for European society to begin buzzing about prospects for a sixth Mrs. Niarchos. By December, Hélène d'Estainville was seen in his company in Saint-Moritz, prompting tabloid descriptions of her as "an elegant woman in her late thirties" who was a "stylish performer on the ski slopes." There was such a flurry over his attentiveness toward Princess Maria Gabriella of Savoy, some thirty years his junior, that Niarchos issued a statement saying they were only "excellent friends."

Another princess, Firyal of Jordan, the ex-wife of King Hussein's brother Mohammed, came closer than anyone else to winning the prize. Their first affair began when she was thirty-one and he was sixty-seven, and it lasted five years. Like Scheherazade, she captivated him with her Oriental glamour and her lively intelligence. She was the first woman to operate in his league, with a temperament as tough as his. A wise member of the Parisian "*gratin*" explains, "He was scared of Firyal. All the other girls, they let him treat them badly. Firyal would answer back very roughly herself, and he was quite impressed."

The highborn women in the Niarchos coterie were displeased that Firyal could control him so thoroughly. They saw an opening when Firyal traveled to Houston on the Niarchos plane to care for one of her sons, who had been in an accident. A well-known baroness began whispering to Niarchos that Firyal was interested only in his fortune, that he needed a woman closer to his age who had money of her own. "Why not have a romance

with Hélène Rochas? She is pretty, and she won't cost you."

But the match misfired. There was the small problem of communication: she had never bothered to learn much English, and he spoke little French. Her idea of perfection was breakfast in bed followed by dress fittings, art shows, and long gossipy talks on the phone with her friends. Life with Hélène was just too tame and settled for Niarchos's taste. When friends saw how bored they looked at parties, it was evident that she couldn't possibly hold his interest.

Although he returned to Firyal for a time, her defiance eventually wore thin. The other women may have been too dull, but Firyal pushed him too far. "She was too much of a hellcat," says Marina Cicogna. "He really cared for her, and she amused him, but he thought she was bad for his health—too much of a strain. It's sad, because nothing amuses him now."

For several years, Niarchos found comfort with a woman who devoted herself to him, Marina Palma, a wealthy Sicilian some forty years his junior. "Greeks are very close to Sicilians," she told me. "We have a lot of Greek blood. We are just as tormented." Marina cared for him after he seriously injured his eye several years ago. But mostly she was an attentive companion, willing to stay with him as he retreated from the world.

For all her devotion, Niarchos pushed Marina Palma away with unreasonable demands such as having plastic surgery on her distinctive aquiline nose, which, according to Nigel Dempster, she refused to do. The paradox in Niarchos's view of women is all too evident: if a woman is agreeable and intelligent, he won't trust her, and if she is spoiled and difficult, he may be amused but he won't last with her. Still, both Marina Palma and Princess Firyal have stayed on friendly terms with him. Firyal visited him on Spetsapoula last summer, and earlier this year Marina Palma stood as godmother to the second child of Spyros Niarchos.

The deaths of Eugenie and Tina marked Stavros Niarchos forever. "He saw who his friends were, and who were not," says Peter Payne. "Since then he has resumed his position in the world, although more reclusive. He doesn't talk about Tina and Eugenie. Somehow it doesn't come up."

It certainly comes up everywhere else. One story, in the words of a Parisian aristocrat, "made a tour of the town" at Niarchos's expense. It concerned Eric Nielsen, a jet-set playboy who died several years ago. During his long illness, he was said to have encountered Niarchos in Paris. "Eric, you're not dead yet," Niarchos supposedly said. "No, because I didn't marry you, Niarchos" was Nielsen's reply.

None have been more deeply affected than the four Niarchos children who lost their mother and their aunt at such an early age. Niarchos bothered little with his children when they were young. As they grew up, he intimidated them. "He loves his children, but to him they are idiots," a well-connected Greek man explained to me. "If one would say something he doesn't like, he would be very rude and insulting, doing what an educated person would not do. But that is a Greek attitude. Greeks are tough with their kids. It is not uncommon. Now he is softer on them, but they have to be with him all the time."

Philip and Spyros were schooled at fashionable Le Rosey, and Spyros put in two years at Gordonstoun before joining his brother at Atlantic College in Wales. Spyros also studied economics at the University of London and did a training stint at Citibank in New York. By the time they were twenty, both boys were at work in Niarchos enterprises. At night they hopped the nightclubs—Castel's in Paris, Xenon in New York with the Warhol crowd, King's Club in Saint-Moritz. Their names were linked with models, actresses, and heiresses. Nicaraguan actress Barbara Carrera distinguished herself by having short flings with *both* young men.

Philip settled down by marrying an obviously pregnant Victoria Guinness in a quiet civil service in Paris in 1984. Niarchos did not attend the wedding, although he later warmed to the marriage when they named their first child after him. In top hat and tails, Spyros married Daphne Guinness, the sweet-natured daughter of Lord Moyne, three years later in a small ceremony at a Greek Orthodox church in Paris. Daphne's grandmother is Diana, Lady Mosley, one of the famous Mitford sisters, who was jailed during World War II for her Nazi sympathies.

The strong social connections brought by each marriage pleased Niarchos. Tall and blonde, Victoria is the more stylish and imposing of the two wives, with wavy Pre-Raphaelite hair and regal bearing. She has become the chatelaine for her father-in-law, overseeing his households as well as her own.

When I ask Philip what he feels is the most important lesson he has learned from his father, he says instantly, "The value of family." Spyros nods affirmatively. Their tight family arrangement may seem oppressive to outsiders, adds Philip, but it comes naturally, as does the family's premium on privacy. "A lot of people are envious," says Philip, "but the way it is arranged works very well for all of us. My father went through a lot of troubles and tragedies, and he took care of us. Now it is our turn to care for him."

Still, friends say that when the brothers are tethered too tightly they long for diverting guests. Last summer Niarchos gave a small dinner party on Spetsapoula—one of the few times in recent years when outsiders have been invited to his table. The late Italian film producer Franco Rossellini spent the evening regaling the table with gossip and anecdotes. At the end, Philip Niarchos told him, "I am so grateful. You made me see my father laughing again."

Constantine remains a persistent worry for his father. He works in the London office on the shipping business and tries to be punctual for his father's afternoon phone calls, but he is still a rakehell, even after spending time in the Betty Ford Center in California. His most notorious scrape was in the early hours of Christmas Day in 1984, when he forced his way into the Aga Khan's Saint-Moritz hotel suite and wakened him by shouting and throwing money at him. Constantine accused the Muslim spiritual leader of having designs on Pilar Goess, an Austrian model who had broken with Spyros Niarchos several months earlier after meeting the Aga on Spetsapoula. The incident caused an irreparable rift between Niarchos and the Aga Khan.

Constantine went on to marry Princess Alessandra Borghese, a strong-willed Italian aristocrat who worked as a stockbroker. At first, friends thought she would keep him in line, although Stavros and the two brothers disapproved of her. "She was told to stay on the right side of Stavros, and she ignored that advice," says one Italian woman. The marriage foundered after less than a year, amid accusations that he flew into "violent rages." When she sought a multimillion-dollar settlement, the Niarchos family branded her a gold digger, although she donated her award of $120,000 to charity.

As the sole female in an overwhelmingly male-dominated family, Maria Niarchos rebelled by choosing the company of men unsuitable to her father. When she decided to marry Alix Chevassus, a handsome Parisian boulevardier, Niarchos cut off contact with her for months. Eventually he relented and gave his twenty-year-old daughter a $500,000 wedding on the grounds of Douville Manor, his seventeenth-century home near Lisieux, Normandy, in June 1979.

Niarchos installed more than six hun-

Stavros Niarchos

dred guests—an array of European aristocrats and celebrities including Princess Caroline of Monaco, Ringo Starr, and Rudolf Nureyev—in Deauville's three top hotels, oddly stipulating that they pay for their phone calls. Under a Mylar tent, tables were constructed around apple trees covered with silk blossoms. The guests drank champagne, dined on caviar, pheasant, pigeon, and salmon, danced at a Xenon-type disco in the barn with a neon sign flashing the couple's initials, and watched a fireworks display. Maria wore a diamond necklace that had belonged to Marie Antoinette, a gift from her father, who announced, "I only have one daughter, and she will only marry once, so I want to do it right"—a remark that must have stung the forgotten Elena.

Maria's marriage lasted only slightly longer than Constantine's. She bounced back by taking over her father's bloodstock business, and last year she married quiet, hardworking Stephan Gouaze, who works for a French bank in Djakarta, where they live in a tasteful but unimposing four-bedroom house. "She has more independence now," says one of her friends. "As a woman, it is expected that she follow her husband. But in her case that gives her a privileged position."

How the children will eventually run the family empire is anybody's guess. Only Maria found a chance to show her mettle, when her father lost interest in his horses, but at the family's insistence she has been selling off their bloodstock instead of buying. Since she is a woman, she is unlikely to assume a significant role.

Friends say that Philip and Spyros will dominate. As the eldest, Philip clearly takes the lead. He has been bitten by his father's art-collecting bug, although his focus is exclusively on contemporary artists such as Julian Schnabel and Francesco Clemente, both of whom he has made a point of getting to know personally. Philip and Spyros seem close and comfortable, one often picking up on the other's thoughts to respond seamlessly to my inquiries. But after years of doing their father's bidding, the sons remain untested. As one of their Greek friends explained, Niarchos "has never given them the freedom to really find out what they can do."

The most remarkable aspect of Niarchos's waning years is that the obsessive drive that built his fortune and his great art collections is now directed entirely on himself as he doggedly follows diet and exercise routines to maintain his health. Yet in his quest for survival he seems to have given up on life.

When his two newest grandchildren were christened in February in the large pine-paneled foyer at Villa Marguns, he left after a short time and declined to join the celebratory dinner later that evening at the Chesa Veglia restaurant. Even old friends such as Gianni Agnelli catch only fleeting glimpses of him. "Doesn't he miss seeing people?" I ask Philip. "Yes, he misses them," Philip replies, "but he knows it would be too much of a strain."

The grand life of Stavros Niarchos, which once approached the scale of opera, has become small and prosaic. "He gives the impression that he can't give a damn, but basically he cares a lot about what people think," says Peter Payne. "What he appreciates is not being treated as if he were a monster in a glass cage." Yet that is what he has become. The price for controlling his own world is that Stavros Niarchos is the only one who can live there. □

Demi Moore

(Continued from page 118) level that he's at and me where I am. And I don't have any desire to compete with him. I feel that I am a competitive person, but it's mostly with myself."

Still, after all the tabloid headlines about Willis and his $65 million bomb, *Hudson Hawk*, and the tales about his-and-her entourages and bands of bodyguards, it seemed for a time that Moore was accumulating bad-behavior points almost as fast as her husband. She took charge on the set of *Mortal Thoughts*, which she co-produced, and brusquely removed a director she felt wasn't working out. On *The Butcher's Wife*, she outmuscled first-time director Terry Hughes: having cut off her long hair for *Ghost*, she decided it was time to change her look again and dyed her hair platinum without consulting anyone first.

Rob Reiner admits that he'd heard Moore was trouble. But when she came in to read for the part in *A Few Good Men* he thought, "O.K., this is it. She had all the qualities I was looking for. She projects intelligence, she *is* intelligent, she has strength, and a sexuality." The last was crucial, since the courtroom drama includes no love scenes, yet requires a certain tension between her character and Tom Cruise's. What's more, they are both lawyers who are also in the military—not the easiest personality types to humanize. Even though *A Few Good Men* is in some sense Cruise's movie, and Nicholson's brutal colonel is the flashy role, Reiner predicts it will be Moore that the audience will be talking about on the way home. "It's unlike anything she's done before," he says. "A lot of people will be knocked out by her performance."

Reiner says he went with his instincts because, as a former actor himself—he played "Meathead" on the hit TV series *All in the Family*—he knows "what actors go through when they are in a situation when they are as intelligent as, or more intelligent than, the powers that be. What comes out is a person who is being difficult, when all they are trying to do is make the project better."

In a funny way, Moore has made a career out of being better than the movies she's been in. From her early, eminently forgettable films, including *Choices*, *Parasite*—in which she is pursued by a giant slug—and *Blame It on Rio*, with Michael Caine, through her middle, Brat Pack period, including *St. Elmo's Fire*, *About Last Night*, and Emilio Estevez's awful *Wisdom*, to her more recent, non-ingenue roles in *The Seventh Sign* and *We're No Angels*, she has always seemed to be rising above the material.

"It's magic, and when it's there, it's there," says the producer Joel Silver, who tried unsuccessfully to persuade John Hughes to cast Moore in *Weird Science* in the mid-1980s, then went on to make Willis's movie career in *Die Hard*. "Everyone knew it was going to happen for her."

"Demi is one of the smartest people I've ever met," says *Indecent Proposal* producer Sherry Lansing, who first met Moore eight years ago when she tapped her for a script about sexual obsession called *Madness of a Seduced Woman*. Although the project never got off the ground, "for Demi, it was more than a movie, it was a passion." Lansing went on to make *Fatal Attraction* with Glenn Close, but she has always wanted to work with Moore. "I have incredible respect for her. She stuck in there back then and fought for it. She put herself on the line. She didn't just say,

'Call me when it's ready.' She has guts, which is unusual in a young actress."

"She seems to be ascending," observes Alan Rudolph, who stepped in as director of *Mortal Thoughts*. "A few years ago, people might have thought her moment would come and go. But instead she just keeps getting better and better."

But, for a comer, Moore has been a long time arriving. Even after *Ghost* took in $200 million at the box office in 1990, many in the industry thought that she was the one who "cried well." So when she seemed to claim responsibility for the movie's success and started negotiating for better perks and photo approval *and* began traveling with six assistants in the exalted manner of her husband, who in his $10 million contract for *Billy Bathgate* had it in writing that he be serviced by an army of twenty-two, many of her colleagues thought she was getting way ahead of herself.

"Demi does not fly commercial," intones one studio executive, who believes she picked up most of her worst habits from Willis. "She only takes private jets. Demi could describe them, and she knew in detail about every studio's plane. Warner's planes were this way, Paramount's planes were that way. It was incredible."

By the time *Ghost* became a hit and she was in Deauville doing the European press tour, Moore was in the throes of a full-fledged star trip. She was being attended by an assistant, three other people who did her hair, makeup, and wardrobe, and a masseuse who would dispense backrubs at a moment's notice. Of all the female stars in France that week promoting movies, including Whoopi Goldberg and Goldie Hawn, Moore was the only one who felt the need of a bodyguard to announce her importance.

During the press junket, Moore also demonstrated an early flair for media manipulation. First the studio heard that she required a room change because the color of her suite did not complement the clothes she had packed for interviews. Then she began demanding that the local press sign agreements giving her photo approval. "It was mind-boggling," recalls a colleague who was there. "These weren't newspaper reporters putting questions to the queen. They were paparazzi shouting, 'Hey, Demi, how do you like Deauville?' It was ridiculous." (In the end, she relented, and was snapped like everyone else.)

But Rudolph, who was working with Moore on *Mortal Thoughts* while *Ghost* was being released and watched her experience that first rush of stardom, says what he saw was "a very, very smart person" who was struggling to assert more control over her career. "She enjoys the trappings, but she doesn't get trapped by them," he says. "She has a terrific laser-like quality, a real sense of what the right frequency is, both as an actress and as a person. She knows she has to go out and get what she wants. It's all about surviving on her terms."

As it happens, Moore really hates to play the sweet, passive women that audiences have identified her with. She tried to talk *Ghost* director Jerry Zucker into allowing her to make her bereaved character stronger and more assertive. "Demi prefers to play tough, angry characters—she isn't attracted to those kinds of soft characters," explains Zucker. "She doesn't like to smile on-screen."

Stepping out into the bright, Malibu sunshine, Moore wads four sticks of chewing gum into her small mouth and pulls a baseball cap down over her eyes in preparation for a ten-mile run. Her dainty body is encased in black spandex bicycle shorts and a midriff top. There isn't an inch of body fat in sight. She is in better shape now, after her second child, than when she was twenty and shooting *Blame It on Rio* in a bikini.

When she landed the role in *A Few Good Men*, Moore hired Rob Parr, who whipped Madonna into shape for her "Blonde Ambition" tour, as her full-time personal trainer. Parr started her on a regimen of pool exercises during the last trimester of her pregnancy. Knowing she had to be back at work in two months, says Moore, was a "great motivator."

Since Scout's birth, she has put in three hours a day, seven days a week. Biking, hiking, running, weight training—the whole muscle-building, body-chiseling routine. On location, she and Parr rise as early as four A.M. to fit her workouts into her shooting schedule. "I see this as a life choice," says Moore, who allows herself to skip a day every couple of weeks. "In my big, big picture, I want to be seventy and going on a hike with my grandchildren. I don't want to be missing out. And that motivates me to get up and do something every day."

But Moore won't elaborate beyond that, carefully sidestepping any questions that might reveal too much of the sweat she's put into achieving her glamorous body. She waxes nostalgic about old Hollywood as a time when "the media and the studio worked together." True, she allows, much of what that partnership manufactured was "deceitful," but she prefers to think that "they wanted to create entertainment, and magic . . . and to move people's spirits."

Surprisingly, Moore is not sensitive about her mixed reputation—her defensiveness is reserved for snarky comments about her husband's career—and she readily admits she can be "tough when things aren't done to my satisfaction." When push comes to shove, Moore sends in her Marine, a killer of an assistant named Daneen Conroy, a friend of nine years and an employee for six, who refers to herself as Moore's "partner," and spends much of her time on a cellular phone with her own assistant. "Demi's very political," observes one friend. "She knows when to come on like gangbusters, and she knows when to send in Daneen."

"Demi's a very focused lady," agrees Terry Hughes, who concedes that he and Moore didn't always see eye to eye on *The Butcher's Wife*. "And she's extraordinarily secure." When she showed up on his set with platinum-colored hair, he notes, "it took some getting used to."

Overall, audiences were not very taken with Moore's peroxided psychic, and Paramount's hopes for the romantic fantasy went unfulfilled. By all accounts, three back-to-back box-office duds, including Dan Ackroyd's almost unwatchable *Nothing but Trouble*, should have set back her career. Yet Moore, with her uncannily appealing face, kept getting offered better roles. "The camera truly, truly loves her," says Hughes, "and she wants to be a fine actress, and pursues that very aggressively and determinedly."

Adrian Lyne, who had auditioned Moore for every one of his previous six movies, didn't actually consider her for *Indecent Proposal* until quite late in the day, after a number of other actresses didn't work out for one reason or another. When Moore came in to audition, he still had doubts. "You meet her and she's a very strong woman with very strong opinions, and you kind of wonder," says Lyne, who is already on location in Las Vegas, "but I saw her at the read-through with Bob Redford and Woody Harrelson and she was just enchanting." He pauses. "You would never," he adds, "expect that quality of gentleness from her public persona."

Over dinner at the Ivy, Moore chats easily about her children and her marriage while she feeds cooked carrots to four-year-old Rumer and a banana-strawberry frappe to ten-month-old Scout, who she says is "Bruce in a dress."

Also seated at the table are Madison, the plump blonde nanny, Daneen (and her cordless phone), and Guy, the ultimate in employee as power accessory: baby bodyguard. Not even the two tiny Schwarzenegger offspring come in for this kind of around-the-clock protection. Moore, call-

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ing the security a "fact of life," says that there are actually several more bodyguards who aren't along today and that to the kids the rotating guard patrol is "just part of the family."

But even by Hollywood standards this is a larger-than-life family. In the course of a two-hour interview at home, a parade of household staff passes by—the housekeeper who answers the door, the cook who serves lunch, one of Willis's assistants, the bodyguard, the nanny, the nanny's friend with her little charge, two workmen, one of whom is drilling something in another room, and later Rob Parr, who is around all the time anyway because he trains husband and wife separately. And this is, by Moore's estimation, "a quiet day," because Willis and his gang are out of town and her assistant is off running errands. "They are never alone," says a friend, shaking her head in amazement. "If you ask me, it's a pretty weird marriage, and a pretty weird way to live, surrounded by people all the time."

While Moore says she suffers occasional "conflicts" about whether her children are getting enough of her time, she seems proud of how busy she is, remarking several times that this day is not nearly as hectic as most. She is clearly orchestrating the controlled chaos of her elaborate household with the same zealousness she's brought to her career. "Marriage was a goal, I should say, first of all," she declares in her disarmingly direct fashion, "and a family, for me as a young girl, was my image of what I hoped for. It was part of my big picture." She wants to have two or three more children, has also thought of adopting, and one day hopes to be "the grandmother of a huge clan." Another goal is to prove that women don't have to choose between a profession and a personal life. "I have just never understood why you couldn't have it all," she says, not missing the irony of her own words. "I feel kind of childlike in my point of view, but why should we compromise?"

Making *A Few Good Men* was the best working experience of Moore's career, in part because the set was crawling with kids: there was Reiner's baby son, Nicholson's two young children, and the little boy of Kevin Bacon, who is also in the film. "It was fun just showing up every morning," says Moore.

"I think only once or twice in your career do you get to work on a set like that," she adds wistfully. "The kids would come to visit every day, and we would walk next door and visit Bruce," who was filming *Death Becomes Her* with Goldie Hawn and Meryl Streep. "He'd be in his old-man makeup, and Goldie and Meryl were in their huge blond wigs. Then we'd all go to see the wild tigers on Billy Crystal's set, where they were shooting *Mr. Saturday Night*. It was the closest thing to what old Hollywood must have been like."

This summer promises to be a logistical challenge even for a master organizer like Moore. At the moment, Willis is off preparing for his next picture, *Three Rivers*, which begins shooting in Pittsburgh next week. Since *Indecent Proposal* will keep Moore in Las Vegas for the next five weeks, the children will be put up in a hotel with her, and Willis will be commuting, which she says "will be difficult." Moore has spent only one night away from her girls so far, and says she and Willis make it a point not to be apart for more than two weeks.

"It's never easy," says Joel Silver, who has produced many of Willis's movies, including the ill-fated *Hudson Hawk*, and is a close friend. "They are traveling all the time, and trying to keep the family together. People think you become a famous movie star and make lots of money and all your problems are over. But that's when they begin. It's hard to deal with success. It happens so fast and it can be over in a flash. They're hanging in there."

"They manage by being in love and loving their daughters," says Alan Rudolph. "They both come from someplace that has a real truth about it. Their family histories keep them honest. You go to their house and the warmth between them is totally genuine. That's their ultimate protection."

Moore feels that most of the pressure on them as a couple comes from the media, which are always printing their respective box-office receipts and in other ways pitting them against each other. When Willis had to work on the day of the Academy Awards, Moore went stag, attending the ceremonies with three of her girlfriends, which inspired tabloid gossip about the state of her union. "Like Bruce always says, no one wants to read about how happy we are," she says.

Moore also believes in letting off a little steam now and then. With Willis out of town, she threw a "goddess party," featuring a Moroccan feast, a male stripper, two saleswomen demonstrating the latest sexual devices, which were handed out as party favors, and a fevered game of "pin the dong on the hunk." "It was wild," says Suzanne Todd, an independent producer who is one of Moore's best friends, and whose partner and boyfriend is David Willis, Bruce's younger brother. Todd explains a bit sheepishly that it was actually a surprise birthday party for her and Conroy. "I was hiding under the coffee table before the evening was over."

But if Moore is successfully running her own show now, she says she takes nothing for granted. "It's very easy for me to see what I've got and where I've come from," she says softly. "But you don't know. You don't know. I can be O.K. and know what I've got today. And maybe sometimes I stop and I'll say, you know, 'Next year...' But I don't like to think too far in advance. The truth is you can have a great marriage, but there are still no guarantees."

When asked why she is so cautious about the future, Moore answers slowly. "Maybe I'm superstitious," she says, "afraid that what I've got may go away. But I'm not cautious about what I'm doing. I plow ahead like there's no tomorrow."

"Demi is a complex person," says one friend. "She's a tough customer, but you have to admire her. She comes from a dysfunctional family, and she's gotten it together and made a life for herself. She's made great strides. She's the kind of person who could be a real nightmare, a mess, and you could find yourself talking to a substance. But she's not that way. The one difficult thing about Demi is that the sun rises and sets on her. She is totally consumed with herself."

She is also dedicated to self-improvement, and draws inspiration from Katharine Hepburn, whom she sees as someone who lives life according to her own rules. "She wrote about discipline as the key to everything in her book and I believe it down to my core," Moore says fiercely. "If there is structure, you can go anywhere with it, and with structure you can do anything. I've had to teach myself that because it certainly wasn't a given."

In her "big picture," she is of course much more than flavor-of-the-month. Her ambitious outline calls for becoming a box-office bombshell, a Hollywood mogul, and the mother of a dynasty. "I love this a lot," she says, giving the words a defiant edge, "and I plan to be doing it a long time."

"Her whole approach to life is very organized and disciplined," observes Hughes. "She sets very high goals for herself, whether it's her body, or her family, or her career." Moore, he says, "is driven. She is someone who needs to succeed."

"I just want the end result of things to be the highest quality they can be," Moore says simply. "I want good work. I want things to be the best they can be. I want greatness." □

The Creeks

(Continued from page 152) sugar refinery in the Philippines. He was generous, he was courteous, and—like all great party givers—he was shy. He preferred observing to being observed. He became the consummate host of the Abstract Expressionists, throwing parties that almost forty years later still evoke nostalgic sighs.

The most famous story of a Creeks party concerns a no-show. There was a musical evening at the Creeks on the night of August 11, 1956, at which Pollock was expected. By this time, the man dubbed by *Life* seven years earlier as arguably the greatest living American painter was rotten with drink. His wife, Lee Krasner, had fled his abuse on a solo visit to Paris, confiding to Dragon that she wanted a divorce. "I told her to wait, to think about it while she was away," Dragon remembers. "I knew the man was going to destruct." Drunk, Pollock called the Creeks from a bar to say he would be late for the party. He never made it. In an alcoholic fury, he drove his Oldsmobile off the road at top speed, and his head was crushed against a tree. The musical evening proceeded on schedule. The audience never knew.

It was Pollock and Krasner who had brought Ossorio and Dragon to East Hampton originally. At Pollock's second show at the Betty Parsons Gallery in January 1949, Ossorio bought a large drip painting, *Number 5, 1948*. When the painting was damaged in delivery, Pollock offered to repair it. Ossorio and Dragon drove out and stayed overnight with Pollock and Krasner in Springs, a section of East Hampton. They were impressed by its beauty. Returning to pick up the canvas a month later, they rented the large Helmuth house on posh Jericho Lane for the summer. It was a wonderful place for a painter. But for a dancer?

They moved instead to Paris, Ted dancing with the Paris Opera Ballet, Alfonso painting. When, a year later, the Pollocks cabled from East Hampton that the Creeks was for sale, Ossorio considered how best to pose the question to Dragon. "If I get it, will you break your contract and go back?" Ossorio asked him. "You've had your career and you're a first dancer. Stop at the top. You haven't seen the place, but you'll love it." Dragon thought it over for a week. "I didn't want the feeling of being the kept little thing on Georgica Pond," he explains. But he agreed.

On the ocean-liner voyage (the way people traveled from France to New York in 1951), Ted bought a set of *Île-de-France* souvenir ashtrays. "Do you want to see?" he said to Krasner as she drove him out for his first peek at the Creeks. "I've started to buy things for the house." When she saw the kitschy ashtrays, she laughed and laughed and laughed. "Ted," she said, "you have no idea."

The Creeks was a moldering mansion that had been built in 1899 by Grosvenor Atterbury, the architect of some of the grandest Southampton summer cottages. For this project, Atterbury had unusual clients: an extravagant artistic couple, Albert and Adele Herter, who painted society portraits for handsome fees and decorated fashionable homes at even greater profit. In the Creeks, Atterbury combined the grandiosity of wealthy Southampton with the bohemian pretensions of East Hampton. The house's green roof alluded to the then fashionable Orient, as did the Chinese temple front that was reassembled on one wall of the double-height salon, a room in which Adele—dressed in embroidered robes and surrounded by cut dahlias—enjoyed hosting tea parties. The house was designed for elaborate entertaining. When Ossorio first saw it, however, it had been uninhabited for several years. "You had the feeling that if you touched the wall your hand would come back wet," says Pollock biographer Jeffrey Potter, who saw the Creeks at that time. "It was like a catacomb. It spoke to me of death and depression." Ossorio bought it for $35,000.

Then he emptied it. The house was full of stuff—from the canned goods in the cellar (the Herters had operated a working farm) to the Wagnerian costumes in Albert's studio, a grand building that doubled as a theater for amateur dramatics. There were many old paintings, including some full-length portraits that Ossorio gave to Pollock, who admired the shape of the canvases. Beneath some of the celebrated Pollock drips, Dragon says, an X-ray eye might detect a Victorian dowager.

In the same missionary spirit, Ossorio and Dragon converted their late-nineteenth-century house into a contemporary showplace. The Herters had painted the interior Chinese red, imperial gold, and a robin's-egg tint known as Herter blue. Ossorio and Dragon whitewashed it. They covered the floors with gray carpets, and scattered a few potted bamboos and Oriental rugs in strategic places. They created, in short, a residence that was a modernist gallery, the perfect place to display their growing collection of paintings by Pollock, Dubuffet, Still, and de Kooning.

Since Ossorio was preoccupied with his art, Dragon managed most of the entertainment. "Ted wants to be sure that in this house you have the right hors d'oeuvres, the right flowers," says a friend, landscape designer Harry Acton Striebel. "The fountains had to be on. The iced tea had to have fresh mint. The lemons had to be served on a dish with a pedestal. The almonds he would roast before every cocktail party in kosher salt." Yet at the lavish dinners for which the Creeks became known, Ted often failed to appear. Confident that every detail of the menu was in place, having set the table as he liked with overflowing fruit bowls and tosses of candied violets and other delicacies (a style he said he had borrowed from Marie Antoinette), he would vanish in the wings. Where was he? Who was he? In the early years, awed by Alfonso's wealth and erudition, many visitors found Ted to be a mystery—a mystery not worth pursuing.

They had met in the Berkshires in a scene out of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta: Alfonso was sketching on an easel in a meadow when Ted passed by, picking flowers. It was 1947, and Ted was at Jacob's Pillow studying on scholarship with Ted Shawn. Having discovered the world of ballet by chance as a teenager in the Northampton, Massachusetts, Y.M.C.A., Edward Dragon Young had used dance as an exit visa from his working-class Catholic family to the brighter circles of New York. At a Broadway audition, Agnes de Mille asked his name, and he told her. "Throw the Young *out*," she declaimed. He was Ted Dragon from then on.

Although he had seen a lot since leaving Northampton, Dragon had never met anyone like Ossorio. Crisply elegant with mandarin manners, the young Ossorio had a polished, exotic beauty. "He had mannerisms as well as manners," recalls art critic B. H. Friedman. "He'd say, 'As you know, Bob, the Merovingians had a very different sort of weapon from the so-and-sos,' or 'As you've read in Baudelaire's letters . . .' " The more one got to know him, the more impressive he became. He seemed to know everything, from the intricacies of the Latin Mass to the arcana of British royal genealogy to the habits of aboriginal tribes—the list could go on and on. "What drew me to Alfonso was his mind," Dragon says. "In the ballet when all you talk about is the metatarsal and the elbow joint, it would make me so angry. I thought there must be something more."

Born in Manila, the fourth of six sons of a Spanish father and half-Chinese mother, Ossorio was educated in Catholic boarding schools in England and the United States

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before graduating from Harvard. In 1940 he ran off to Taos, New Mexico, with a redheaded divorcée, Bridget Hubrecht. They were married in early 1941, but by year's end the marriage had dissolved. A couple of other momentous events occurred at about the same time: Ossorio had his first one-man show in New York, and the United States entered World War II. Ossorio, by now a naturalized American citizen, enlisted in the army; before he could report, however, he was hit by a taxi on Madison Avenue, suffering a badly broken leg. Two years elapsed before he joined the service, as a medical illustrator. The delicate drawings he made of bloody surgeries typify Ossorio's youthful work: fastidious treatment of grotesque, surreal subjects. (Ossorio's early pictures will be the subject of a show at the Whitney Museum in New York later this year.)

The move to the Creeks in 1952 gave Ossorio more space to work and to exhibit his collection. Along with his Pollocks, he by then had many Dubuffets and several important Stills. The effect of these artists on his own work was increasingly obvious. His painting became less illustrational and more fluid. His preoccupation with violent colors, surface texture, and allover design revealed his sympathy with Abstract Expressionism. On a personal level, he formed an unlikely friendship with Pollock. The brooding, tongue-tied westerner would appear to have had little in common with the wealthy, well-educated Ossorio. Maybe that was the secret. "There couldn't be two people more different than Pollock and Ossorio," says B. H. Friedman, who has written biographies of both men. "But I think there was mutual respect and not much grounds for competition."

When not producing art of his own, Ossorio was busy advancing the work of others, traveling frequently to New York and Europe. In the late fifties, East Hampton during the winter was still very much a rural village. Left alone for long stretches, Dragon became morose and resentful. He had given up his dance career, and for what? To become, as he had feared, the kept little thing on Georgica Pond. "It was a terrible jolt to come from being a star in the Paris Opera—*une étoile*—and all that color in my life," he recalls.

About the only excitement in the Hamptons those winters came from reports of odd burglaries of valuable antiques from empty summer houses. For four years, Chippendale mirrors, Ming vases, and Oriental rugs disappeared mysteriously from the unguarded estates. It caused quite a stir in February 1959 when the East Hampton chief of police just happened to see a man emerging from the window of Pan Am founder Juan Trippe's house near Georgica Pond. Ending the string of burglaries, the policeman arrested Ted Dragon.

It had started as an impulse. In 1956, passing the Helmuth house (then owned by art dealer Leo Castelli) as he exercised his two standard poodles, Ted noticed the door ajar. He walked in. It was so easy. That would be the pattern over the years. He never broke into a house, and he never sold the things he stole. Some pieces he gave away. Others he displayed, telling Alfonso they had come from Northampton relatives. Most of the booty landed in the attic of the Creeks. "That attic, you couldn't *move*," Dragon says. "I had a lot of it restored and reupholstered. Afterwards, everyone was very nice about it. A woman in Sag Harbor said, 'I never would have thought to put rose and gold on that Empire set.' "

Following Ted's arrest, Ossorio obtained the services of Dr. David Abrahamsen, a psychiatrist specializing in criminal insanity. With the help of Abrahamsen's testimony (which cost a Pollock and a Dubuffet), Dragon received a suspended sentence provided he undergo psychotherapy. Ossorio supported him without flinching. As B. H. Friedman recalls, "Alfonso said, 'Bob, you mustn't ever think this was one of my charities. This was an act of love.' Alfonso could have washed his hands of Ted. There was nothing that Ted could have done that would have humiliated Alfonso more." Recognizing that he, and not the other absent homeowners, was the true target of these irrational thefts, Ossorio became more responsive to Dragon. And thanks to therapy, Dragon grew more independent. "It cemented our relationship," Dragon says. "How could you ever turn on a person who has stood by you that way? I would say that episode saved my life and let this whole thing be created here at the Creeks. It was too much maybe for me, this house. But it put it all in focus."

In the early sixties, Ossorio cut back on the New York excursions and spent more time in his studio, working on three-dimensional assemblages that he called "congregations." On shingles or pieces of plywood, he mounted the flotsam of nature and civilization—glass eyes, ropes, horns, bones, hypodermic needles, mirrors, pottery shards, driftwood, rotted fruit—and then embedded these elements, often brilliantly colored, in clear plastic. Little at the Creeks was wasted. "Every soup bone was boiled in ammonia and dried out in the sun," Dragon says. "I was always losing things. . . . If I'd see a vase gone, I'd know it was smashed and in a picture." One of Ossorio's favorite substances was something he called "end-of-the-day plastic"—a modern equivalent of the color-streaked end-of-the-day glass that was produced in Victorian factories after the evening whistle blew and the remaining bits were tossed into a melting pot. Made in the same fashion by manufacturers of colored telephones, end-of-the-day plastic was just the sort of stuff Ossorio appreciated: humble in origin, viscously sensual, ambiguously evocative. Out of such glittering trash, the artist assembled complex pieces, often with religious themes. Indeed, the whole enterprise of sanctifying cast-off materials in mosaic-like works of art had religious overtones. As gaudy as the floats in a Mardi Gras parade, Ossorio's congregations wound up in a few museum collections, but repelled most critics. "Someone once said they resembled what was left after cannibals had feasted on Balkan royalty," Grace Glueck quipped in *The New York Times*.

The failure of his work to catch on with the public and his doctor's admonition to exercise drew Ossorio out of the studio and into his garden. Under the Herters, the garden of the Creeks had been shaped by the fussy taste and cheap muscle of the Victorian period. Many of the beds were plain ivy or pachysandra, empty stages waiting for performers. "I want tomorrow for the garden to be blue," Mrs. Herter might say, and the summer staff of thirty Japanese gardeners would snip blue blooms, insert them into vials, and thrust them overnight into the beds. Ossorio and Dragon tore out a rose garden, which had absorbed one gardener's full-time attention. They removed the Concord-grape vines from the porte cochere, eliminating the need to sweep the doorway three times daily in autumn. And gradually, both to minimize maintenance and to create a garden that would be attractive year-round, they began cultivating evergreens.

In the early 1970s Ossorio turned the full beam of his intelligence on the garden. He was an obsessive researcher. The library at the Creeks contains some 15,000 books, ranging from liturgy to pornography: Ossorio would thumb through catalogues, ordering books by the boxful, reading a volume or two a night. When he became interested in wine, for instance, he learned all he could about the vineyards of Bordeaux, acquiring a distin-

guished cellar in the process. Fascinated by food, he devoured cookbooks like novels. "In the long winter months, when people said, 'What do you do?'... My God! I was *chopping!*" Ted jokes. Ossorio's affluence, obsessiveness, and eccentric taste lent a tinge of unreality to all of his endeavors, including his fondness for cooking. "One of the last things he discovered," Ted reports, "was a tenderloin of pork marinated for three days in a bottle of Château d'Yquem and prunes." (Before requesting the recipe, you perhaps should know that Yquem, even in weak vintages, sells for more than $100 a bottle.) Journalist Patsy Southgate recalls that the Creeks, with its artwork of horns and eyeballs, was the first place she ever tasted a stuffed heart. "It was just the right thing to serve in that atmosphere," she says. "You wondered whose heart it was."

So when he took up evergreens, Ossorio was unlikely to settle for the yews and junipers of his East Hampton neighbors. The weirder the specimen, the more he wanted it. Because Georgica Pond has a changing shoreline, he constructed a very expensive and controversial retaining wall to keep the water out. To pay for it, Ossorio and Dragon sold a Pollock masterpiece, *Lavender Mist* (bought in 1950 for $3,000), to the National Gallery in Washington for $2 million. Over Ossorio's final two decades, he parted with much of his collection to pay his gardening bills. "There was always plenty to live on and keep the place going in a normal way," Dragon says. "But Alfonso would spend $300,000 in three months on trees. There's about $4 million of trees out there."

Ossorio designed the concrete and metal sculptures, mostly in bold red or blue, that punctuate the garden. His primary interest, however, was in the plants themselves, and he arranged them like sculpture, directing cranes to lift, tilt, and move them until he was satisfied with their placement. Ignoring all rules of landscaping, he clumped trees of contrasting shapes and colors in groups that looked neither natural nor formal. One weeping white pine was trained to resemble a dinosaur. Three spruces—green, blue, and yellow—were grafted together into one tree. Ossorio loved the weeping, the contorted, the fastigiate, the varicolored, the purple, red, and yellow—all that refined gardening taste usually eschews. In his plantings, as in his art, refined taste takes a backseat.

To set off the colors of the garden, Ossorio and Dragon painted their stucco house black, with red, blue, and white trim. They made their oval swimming pool black as well (perhaps starting the trend that has since swept Long Island). So it was a natural progression to paint the interior walls of the house black and to replace most of the Abstract Expressionist paintings (which were needed to pay for the trees, anyway) with Ossorio's own congregations. "I got the idea from a jewel box," Dragon says. "When you want to see a pin or a string of pearls in a jewelry store, they pull out the black velvet cushion. Everything looks fabulous set off against black. We painted the house black and suddenly everything started to look better."

By the time of Ossorio's death, the Creeks—inside and out—had become the artist's ultimate congregation. "His greatest work is the whole Creeks," Dragon says modestly. "All I did was go along and embellish." And it is true that, while Dragon acquired most of the furniture in the house and kept the place running, Ossorio molded it all to his peculiar aesthetic. Precious and tawdry, delicate and crass, old and new, the Creeks is a constant juxtaposition of forms that refuse to meld. Ted himself—especially when decked out in a caftan, sandals, and African beads—fits right in. "You're like one of my pictures walking out of the house," Alfonso would tell him with delight. Ted could carry it off self-confidently because he knew that behind him, in blue coat and Harvard tie, stood Alfonso. Indeed, it wasn't just Ted himself, in his gaudy multi-ethnic attire, who resembled a congregation. More fundamentally, it was Ted and Alfonso together: so opposite in every surface aspect, yet bonded together in the antithetical, unifying spirit of Ossorio's art.

Which may explain why, with Alfonso gone, Ted is eager to sell the Creeks and start a new phase of his life. Although he vows that the property will not go to developers, the Creeks will surely take on a new character under different owners. (Barbra Streisand is on the shortlist of prospective buyers.) As for Ted, he hopes to build a new house that will reproduce his favorite rooms at the Creeks: a large entertaining area, a bedroom, a study, and a big kitchen. "It will be a hollow square with a fountain in the middle and no grounds," he says. "The woods will come right up to the edge. And away from the water—I'm sick of looking at it." Strong as their personalities were, the house's personality was stronger, and Ted and Alfonso were inevitably known as the men who lived at the Creeks. Dragon thinks it may be time to stop residing in a work of art, and to start living in a house that is simply a house. □

CREDITS

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Planetarium

LEO ♌ *July 23–August 22*

Leos were built to handle impossible people and ridiculous situations while remaining suave, unruffled, and calmly spiritual. But it would be hard to imagine outer circumstances more uncomfortable than the current passages of Saturn in your 7th house and Uranus and Neptune in your 6th. There isn't a human being in the world who wouldn't prefer a day at the beach to a round of duty sticking a finger in the dike to save humanity. However, if anybody can stabilize conditions and maintain more pluck and spunk than the Three Little Pigs when they had to deal with the wolf on the other side of the door, it's definitely you right now.

VIRGO ♍ *August 23–September 22*

With Jupiter still in Virgo, you're convinced that you're above all planetary aspects and subject only to your private enthusiasms. So the fact that Mercury is retrograde until August 14, in opposition to a 6th-house Saturn, would ordinarily pose no challenge at all. You've probably been doing the bran-and-broccoli thing and being productive at the old keyboard. Cheating on a diet and sneaking around behind your own back are normally beneath you. But this summer's transits will show you that you're as much of a procrastinator and escape artist as all those Pisceans you are forever preaching to.

LIBRA ♎ *September 23–October 23*

As you yourself are painfully aware, over and over again you're forced into situations where you have to be more polite than the southernest of southern ladies and gentlemen, even if that means you're not always able to be fully real. In fact, few people ever see your primitive, judgmental side. However, with the lunar nodes moving into your solar 3rd and 9th houses, the next eighteen months could be a gigantic round of the most thrilling mind games. Every one of your cultural, political, and religious prejudices will come up for careful and grueling scrutiny. What? Prejudiced? *Vous?*

SCORPIO ♏ *October 24–November 21*

These days, all the people you know are wondering exactly how far your powers are going to extend. Just when everybody expects you to perform a major coup d'état and take over the United Nations, you withdraw, disappear, pull back your troops, and regroup. And then just as they're sure it's safe to go back into the water, here comes that Scorpio fin. On July 31, Pluto goes direct after a five-month retrograde. That means new plans, new strategies, new creative rabbits pulled out of the hat, and little old you getting your rocks off by pushing certain people way beyond their limits.

SAGITTARIUS ♐ *November 22–December 21*

You're entering a new phase of your life in terms of relationships. It is becoming more and more important for you to have that certain wonderful someone to talk to. Bear in mind that the perfect relationship you are seeking might just conceivably exist only in your head. Remember, too, though, that you do not have to settle for just anybody. Whoever the idiot was who said that in this world there is someone for everyone obviously never had to sit alone on the sidelines at the high-school dance or, worse yet, had to resort to doing the polka with the nerdiest nerd in the class.

CAPRICORN ♑ *December 22–January 19*

If, around the full moon in mid-July, you want all the craziness going on to end, ask yourself why, and for what. Just remember how long you resigned yourself—with only the smallest amount of medication here and there—to the drab life you thought was choking your soul out of existence. Don't worry. You will never have to work on that assembly line again. All Capricorns should gather for a mass rally sometime this fall and hurl all their bras and neckties onto a gigantic bonfire. In the meantime you're still waiting and thinking—quite wrongly—that change will come without your having to do a thing to bring it about.

AQUARIUS ♒ *January 20–February 18*

It's really hard for you to go on laughing it up and acting normal, as if you didn't hear that insistent bell clanging in your ear. What bell? The bell you're not supposed to ask for whom it's tolling. That bell. The astrologers of the world recognize the moaning and groaning you are doing in private at the present time. We see, too, that as Pluto starts moving forward in early August you will probably catch a little messianic fever—the tendency to want to be treated as a pure and sacred creature and even to believe that you are one. You're really going to have to watch that closely come fall.

PISCES ♓ *February 19–March 20*

Remember all those times in the past when you were terrified of becoming just another beat-up, wrung-out has-been? Remember how you fought for jobs, worked all kinds of extra hours, did the impossible to prove you weren't flaky? And now, when all you really want to do is retire and spend long sunny mornings pruning the roses, the nodes of the moon have to go and enter your 4th and 10th houses! As far as public and private lives are concerned, you're simply going to have to operate in both. But then, if your life weren't tinged with maddening irony, you wouldn't be a Pisces, would you?

ARIES ♈ *March 21–April 19*

This is that time of year when you try to run away from the mad, mad pressures of the world and the dizzying fact that you have absolutely no idea where you are going. While the sun transits Cancer until late July, you will enjoy sitting around in sneakers with no socks, acting perfectly normal, and pretending you're just family. It would really serve you well to wake up and smell the damned coffee, quit acting like a teenager, stop talking to hear yourself talk, and go look up the word "superego" in the dictionary. For the next year and a half, while the north node is in your 9th house, don't teach. Learn.

TAURUS ♉ *April 20–May 20*

Let's approach this transit of the dragon's tail and head through your 2nd and 8th houses from a happy and healthy perspective. It will last for eighteen months, and during that time you'll be dealing with being somewhat financially dependent on a member of the opposite sex. It could be a close tie to a boss who writes out the paycheck. More likely, though, it will come through a more intimate relationship. It will challenge you to overcome any prejudices you may have about sexual stereotypes. Prove to everyone now that Tauruses can take any news about money—as long as it's good.

GEMINI ♊ *May 21–June 21*

Dear Hamlet: With the south node of the moon passing through Gemini from now until January 1994, expect to have a hundred and one little ego attacks. You'll be madly possessive of yourself, staunchly determined to set boundaries for others, fiercely single-minded about your independence. And yet, there will be people everywhere, and you'll definitely be having relationships with some of them from other cultural or racial backgrounds, so you might as well accept it. If your energy level should drop, or if you should feel as though you were falling back into an old teenage pattern, *find a good shrink and stay there!*

CANCER ♋ *June 22–July 22*

The caldron should be bubbling by the full moon on July 14, or by the time Pluto starts creeping forward in early August. The turf you've been protecting, the old neighborhood dry cleaner who knows you so well you don't have to save the tickets, the house that once seemed so exciting, then boring—these are all part of your old life. You are now feeling the call of the wild and the lure of adventure. Adventure? You? You, whose blood pressure fluctuates in inverse proportion to the bottom line of the bank statement? Question of the summer: Do you throw the old life away completely, or just pay to keep it in storage?

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Lotte Lehmann

Vanity Fair
January 1935



In 1910, Enrico Caruso was so captivated by a twenty-two-year-old German soprano singing her first season at the Hamburg State Opera that he cried, "She has the voice of an Italian!" Lotte Lehmann also enchanted the likes of Puccini, Klemperer, and even the tempestuous Toscanini. But she hit her highest notes during her years with the Vienna State Opera and its co-director Richard Strauss. She created the roles of the Composer in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1916), the Dyer's Wife in *Die Frau ohne Schatten* (1919), and Christine in *Intermezzo* (1924). And while Strauss wrote the title role in *Arabella* (1933) for her, Lehmann became best known for singing the Marschallin (pictured above) in the composer's most popular work, *Der Rosenkavalier*. It was the last role she sang publicly, in San Francisco, in 1946. Before Lehmann left Austria, in the wake of Hitler's Anschluss, she had also been a favorite at the annual Alpine extravaganza cofounded by Strauss, the Salzburg Festival. This month, two Strauss works, *Die Frau* and *Salome*, will be performed at Salzburg, boasting, among other talents, the lightning conductors Sir Georg Solti and Christoph von Dohnányi, and the soaring sopranos Cheryl Studer, Catherine Malfitano, and Eva Marton.

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